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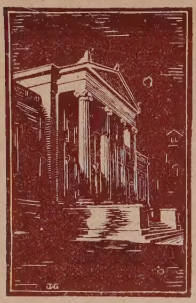

PRESBYTERIAN
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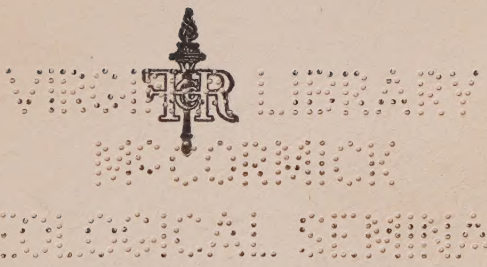
How to Run a Little Sunday School

How to Run a Little Sunday School

By
E. MORRIS FERGUSSON



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Preface

THE worker in the little neighborhood Sunday school, ambitious, earnest, perplexed with many difficulties, ought to have a book on Sunday-school method all his own. In point of fact he needs a whole literature. It was necessary that modern methods in general and grading in particular should be worked out first with reference to conditions in the large and well-appointed Sunday schools. This having been done, the time is ripe for an independent literature of the little Sunday school, in which its principles of operation, its strategic factors and its most effective modes of work shall be studied directly, and not merely by parenthetical chapters and paragraphs. To such a literature this book is a modest and at present a rather lonesome contribution.

The size of the little-school interest in America is worth considering. In the great states of the plains and in part of the South the Sunday school of fifty members is the prevailing type. The International Sunday-School Association's statistics seem to indicate that half the Sunday-school population of the United States is enrolled in Sunday schools of sixty-five members or less. Even in populous New Jersey, with the highest average membership of any state, the schools of fifty or fewer enroll five per cent. of the total Sunday-school membership. For Canada the proportion is even more impressive. There is noth-

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ing little about the little Sunday school, when considered as a constituency standing for its rights.

When we realize, moreover, what our country and the world owe to these same little Sunday schools, and what our city churches have received from them in well started religious life, is it not our common shame that the call of the little Sunday school for adequate educational leadership should for so long have gone practically unheeded?

As General Secretary of the New Jersey Sunday-school Association, and later as Educational Superintendent of Sabbath-school Missions for the Presbyterian Church, the writer has come into close contact with conditions and needs in the work for little Sunday schools in all parts of the United States. While realizing the inherent difficulties of the typical little-school situation, he nevertheless believes that the best and highest in modern Sunday-school method belongs of right to this work, and that the workers in these fields are themselves competent to introduce it and lead it to a successful issue.

This book, therefore, is written for the man or woman in the little Sunday school, to show how such a school may lift itself out of the ruts of custom and tradition, gain the vision of a better day, and take its rightful place among the progressive, graded, efficient and spiritually successful Sunday schools of its field.

Thanks are due Miss Martha E. Robison, Superintendent of Rural Work of the Pennsylvania State Sabbath-School Association, for a number of valuable criticisms and suggestions, which have been embodied in the proofs.

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I

WHAT IT NEEDS

General Needs.—Whoever has to do with the leading of a Sunday school, in a neighborhood where workers are few and difficulties many, will have to give careful consideration to the question of what his Sunday school needs.

Some needs, while undoubtedly great, are so general as to call for little comment. They speak for themselves. The Sunday school needs first of all a competent leader. Perhaps the superintendent feels that that need, at any rate, is now well supplied. Perhaps he feels that a great mistake has been made in choosing him, and that some one far more competent than he ought to be found and installed as his successor. If this last is his feeling, there is much hope for the school. He should however hold his place until the ideal successor appears, and meantime do his best and learn how to do better.

Devoted workers are needed to stand by the leader and help him in carrying out his plans. Well adapted supplies are needed, including some helps not now on the market in form suited to the needs of such a school as we are about to study. God's gracious power is needed, with a constant sense of dependence on Him and a spirit of prayer and love for souls. The school must realize its need of these things. We may say indeed that humility, a sense of need for help, human and divine, is the greatest need of all.

Leaving for the time these general needs, what are some of those specific needs of the little Sunday school which effort might conceivably supply? The term "little" is of course relative. A school of fifty members is little in comparison with the average Sunday school of the city, about which nearly all the books on Sunday-school work are written. It is larger, however, than the average Sunday school in some states of the Union. What are some of the needs of such a school?

Members.—To begin with, there must be enough persons, big and little, to form an organized company. Nine people, for instance, could make a Sunday school, with three in a younger class, four in an older class, and two teachers, one of them acting as superintendent. A Sunday school of eleven, with an average attendance of nine, ran for several years in Ocean County, New Jersey; and there are doubtless hundreds as small or smaller the country over.

Larger numbers than that, however, are required for a properly organized Sunday school. The school of thirty members, or twenty, or even ten, need not feel discouraged; but fifty is the membership required for a really satisfactory educational organization. With two officers, five teachers and forty-three pupils, a Sunday school in the rural districts may consider itself ready for thorough and up-to-date work.

Let us take these numbers as the standard of membership for the typical little Sunday school. Such a school, of course, will try to grow as much larger as it can, by organizing new classes and increasing the size of those it has. But, for the purposes of our study, we will think of a Sunday school as composed

of five classes and fifty members all told. We will keep in mind these five classes, even if our own school has but four, or three, or even two : the others will in such case represent vacancies not yet filled.

Organization.—How shall this force be organized ?

First, of course, we will have a primary class. "Infant class," our grandfathers called it; but an infant is one who cannot talk, and such a name is a base slander as applied to these youngsters. As soon as possible the primary teacher should have an assistant to care for the beginners during the lesson story period. The primary class should take in all the younger children up to and including eight years of age.

Secondly, a junior class. Here belong the boys and girls from nine to twelve, the finest bunch of humanity in the whole school, the best workers, the quickest learners, the most willing to learn new habits, the readiest to love and follow Jesus as their Lord. They should never on any account be mixed with the older ones above or with the little ones below ; and they should never lose a single Sunday's lesson.

Thirdly, an intermediate class, thirteen to sixteen or so. This is usually the hardest class in the school to handle successfully ; but it is also the class from which can be secured the most remarkable results. This class should be organized and given some special work to do. Its president and secretary should be real helpers to the teacher, as well as leaders of the class in good works.

Fourthly, a senior or young people's class of young men and women. The ages may run from sixteen to twenty-three or four. This class also should be or-

ganized, with a full set of officers and committees, and a definite program of work.

Lastly, an adult class, the men and women of the Sunday school. Their membership will mostly be of married people, and their average attendance will be low, for they are full of cares and cannot command their own time every Sunday. But their roll should be carefully kept just the same. Their education in religion is quite as important as that of any of the younger ones. Keep the seniors and the adults carefully distinguished.

With a teacher for each of these five classes, a secretary to look after records, purchases and details, and a superintendent in charge of the whole, and with forty-three pupils distributed among the five classes, the necessary organization of our Sunday school of fifty members is complete.

Suppose it happens that we are so weak on some one of these groups that if we were to divide this way the junior class would be large and the intermediate very small, or the intermediate large and the senior small: what then? Keep the class lines firm as to age, notwithstanding. Perhaps one or two of the oldest and brightest in the class below may be allowed to come over to the upper class, if needed to make up a company. But remember that it is lessons, not looks, that count, and that all such inequalities will correct themselves before long, as promotions take place and newcomers enter.

Teachers.—A Sunday school is a school. It may and should serve other useful purposes; but unless it is a real school it is not worthy of its honored name. Hence the five leaders of these classes must not

merely be teachers, so-called. Each of them must be able to teach the particular class he has by causing its members to do, to know, to be and to love along the lines of activity, knowledge, character, and heart-power appropriate to their years. There is no other possible way of making the Sunday school a school than to get, improve and keep a set of teachers for these classes. As it is seldom that such teachers can be found in the community and put to work just as they are, the school must plan to train them. But that is another story.

Even this, however, is not all. The superintendent must be a teacher too. There are so many ways of not making a Sunday school a school, and some of them are so easy, so customary and so dear to the back-number superintendent's heart, that only a superintendent with the true teacher-spirit is likely to find the strait and narrow way of educational excellence that this book aims to set forth.

Not only must we have these five classes in our Sunday school of to-day: we must retain them as a permanent basis of our teaching plant. Year after year the work of these five classes must go on. The children will grow with the years; the teachers must remain. Until some such arrangement is established, a Sunday school is not really a school. An instructor who travels with his class is not a teacher but rather a tutor. Tutors have their honored place; but they are not teachers. A teacher's work is defined in terms of the school; a tutor's in terms of the particular pupils he is engaged to teach. Our five teachers must be so related to the Sunday school that they will constitute a faculty, each responsible, not for taking

care of certain individuals year after year, but for discharging a certain section of the whole school's responsibility. Each teacher, then, as he senses this trust, will seek to make himself a real primary teacher, or intermediate teacher, or whatever he is, and will study how best to do what needs to be done for his particular pupils during that period of their lives when it is his business to teach them.

Housing.—The Sunday school must meet somewhere. The place of meeting must be such as to furnish proper conditions for good Sunday-school work. Not many of our little-school meeting-places are such as the work needs. Of course these cannot be rebuilt and refurnished to order. But when we know what housing we ought to have, and why what we do have hinders us from reaching good results, we shall be nearer to gaining these results than we were before.

A study of good housing for the small rural Sunday school, therefore, is thoroughly practical, even if there seems to be not the slightest visible prospect that a new or improved building can be had. It is always the unseen that creates the seen. Mind rules matter. To have a Sunday school that needs a good building, that is already doing work worthy of a good building, that will do still better work when it gets its good building, and that knows exactly what sort of building it wants, is to have a school that will surely, some day, get the building it needs.

Plan now for what the Sunday school now needs, and for what it is going to need, as far ahead as you can see. Remember the necessary limitations of work with small numbers. One separate room for the pri-

mary class, another for the adult class, and a broad, well-planned room for all the rest, is probably the best arrangement a five-class school can have, in the present stage of the Sunday-school art. The other uses to which the building is to be put must also not be forgotten.

The main room should be open and cheery in effect, with flat floor a little broader than long, access from the rear, light from rear and sides, a low platform with movable desk, and an unbroken wall behind the desk, so that light will fall on whatever is there displayed. Many a blackboard is made useless by the difficulty of so placing it that all the audience can read what is put thereon. Maps, wall charts and a lantern screen will all require such a wall for proper display. Seat with light, comfortable chairs that can be quickly rearranged in any combination, and give each class its table. The primary room should also be light and flat-floored, seated with low chairs and, if possible, with a tight partition between it and the main room. Only on special occasions should the children sit with the main school; and then they may bring their little chairs with them and carry them back when their part in the service is over.

If a separate primary room is not now possible, its place can be taken for several months in the year by a good out-of-doors. A fine yard, with overhanging trees and a soft green turf, is an educational asset that some Sunday schools have and do not use, and that others could have for a little concerted effort. There is nothing essentially irreligious about fresh air. On the plains, in the arid or semi-arid states, a sunshade would have to be erected or grown; but what such a

school had to do without in maples and green grass it would gain in regularity of clear weather.

Far different from the vision thus hinted at is the reality for most of our five-class Sunday schools. Some meet in old country churches with fixed pews, some in district schoolhouses with fixed desks, built with fearsome exactitude to fit Young America's graded backs and knees. Every possible combination of expedients to draw classes together around and in and over such desks and seats is already familiar to the rural Sunday-school worker and therefore need not be discussed here. Courage! Relief is coming, and that from two directions. Educational reformers are demanding freedom of life in the school, with a daily program calling for seated work only a part of the time. They, too, want an open floor, with relief from desk tyranny. Then the rural life movement leaders want the schoolhouse as a community center, with floors that can be used for all sorts of occasions. Let the rural Sunday-school leaders join in the demand for schoolhouse seating reform. The chance for getting all we need may be nearer than we think.

The chief disadvantage of church pews is the difficulty of introducing tables for centralized class work. Hinged boards, with swinging brackets, may be attached to the pew-backs. By stretching strong wires here and there and running light curtains between the classes, an excellent amount of class privacy can be secured during the lesson period; though the drawback of noise will of course continue.

Equipment.—Besides seating, curtains, screens and class tables, a blackboard has long been preached as a superintendent's necessity. It is, if the superin-

tendent has learned how to use it and knows what he wants it for. Orders of service, new hymns, mottoes, notices and other messages to the eye can be written with an expressman's crayon on large sheets of paper tacked to the wall. Some expert can usually be found who will do this lettering in advance, the superintendent furnishing copy. By ruling such a sheet with vertical pencil lines half an inch apart to represent the Sundays, and cross-hatching with similar half-inch lines leading to a scale in the margin, and graduating this scale according to the size of the school, a chart can be formed on which the attendance can be plotted by the secretary each Sunday, the jagged line showing the school's record for the year.

An instrument to accompany the singing is usually counted a necessity. A piano is better than an organ as a leader of voices, because it more clearly marks the rhythm. If the school has a cabinet organ, let it also have some one who will take a few lessons in the simple art of keeping the organ's inner works clean and in order. The accompanist's musical training should also be a matter of interest to the school. A cornet helps in an out-of-doors gathering; but in a small room its leadership tires the voices and encourages loud singing. Even when well muted, its brass throat is too strong. If used at all, let it be on special occasions.

Several other items of Sunday-school equipment may be briefly noted. A wall clock, well tended, helps in securing punctuality by all concerned. A bulletin-board, mounted near the door on the eye-line, saves the giving out of many a notice and secures publicity for reports, lists of honors and announce-

ments of forthcoming events. Shelves for the Bibles and hymnals enable these to be decently cared for. A separate box or tray for each class will serve for keeping on hand a supply of pads, pencils and other supplies. A set of Bible maps is needed for occasional desk use and for loan to classes whose lesson may need map illustration. The small Kent and Madsen maps, mounted on collapsible iron standard and sold for five dollars, are ideal for the little Sunday school's needs.

Most important of all the items of the school's permanent equipment is its Bible supply. Without relaxing the effort to have each pupil and teacher own his own Bible and bring it with him, provide an adequate supply of Bibles in readable type, and watch their condition. The trend of the times is towards the use of the American Standard Bible ; and if there were no other reason for falling in line, the inconvenience of having two versions in use is so great that the school should promptly put itself on a revised-version basis and encourage all buyers of new Bibles to buy that version alone. There are however many other reasons. The new version of the old Book is the basis of all the graded lessons. The paragraphic and poetic arrangement of the Bible text aids the student in following the subject and understanding the treatment. The translation at many points is clearer, making good sense where King James's translators, working over three hundred years ago, were able to make little or none. The great early manuscripts of the New Testament, unknown or unavailable in 1611, have enabled our modern translators at many points to get nearer to

what the sacred text originally was and so to give us God's Word more perfectly. Those who once accustom themselves to the use of the new version find it just as precious and godly as the dear old form, and better for the work of teaching religion to the children.

Hymn-books, the library and the lesson-help supply will be considered in connection with the work for which these items of equipment are needed.

Relations.—Nothing that is unrelated can properly call itself alive. No amount of internal progressiveness will make any Sunday school, large or small, what it should be, unless it freely relates itself to the life around it and so becomes a part of a larger whole.

If the Sunday school is a church school, its first and nearest relation will be to the local church of which it is a part. It will try to run itself on a church policy. The pastor will be its pastor; and though he may be able to attend only once in two weeks, or three, or four, when he comes he will be honored as the ranking officer and his leadership will be sought. The right of the church to direct in general the Sunday school's work will be acknowledged. By conference, sympathy and coöperation the school and the church will make themselves one.

Beyond the local church lies the denomination. This represents the Sunday school's religious family connection. Duties under this head include (1) a study of the denomination's doctrines, polity and lines of work by the senior class as a regular part of its course of study; (2) a systematic platform treatment of its principal missionary and benevolent

causes, with gifts thereto; (3) an annual offering, large in proportion to ability, for the support of the denominational Sunday-school work, and (4) annual statistical reports promptly and fully rendered. It will ordinarily include also (5) the preference by the school of its own denominational lesson helps and supplies.

A union Sunday school has neither church nor denomination. Its members however have each their separate denominational allegiance and know where the nearest pastor or missionary representing that denomination may be found. It is just as necessary for each boy and girl in a union school to have a church home as it would be if he belonged to a church school. If possible secure a visit and a helpful talk from each pastor represented, utilizing his visit to arrange for the public reception by his church of any of his people who desire to confess Christ.

The spirit of Christian unity is abroad. More and more we are coming to see the evil of denominational rivalry and the waste of separation for merely sectarian reasons. The union school should encourage the union of all its people in one community church, of whatever denomination the majority prefer. But where there is no such community church, the union school should maintain connection, on behalf of its members, with one particular local church of each represented denomination.

Quite different from these relations is the relation of each Sunday school, whether denominational or union, to all the other Sunday schools of its own county. This relationship is free, voluntary and

mutual. Every Sunday school, whether church or union, does some things on its own responsibility. One of these has been to form a county Sunday-school association, or to fall in with the county work already organized in most of the counties of North America.

Every Sunday school needs the stimulus and contact of good county work. For the little Sunday school such help is indispensable. The annual convention is its educational and inspirational rally, its breathing time, its chance to share that joy and uplift of fellowship that the city school may have whenever it pleases. The county secretary is its friend and correspondent, through whom it comes into relation with the great Sunday-school world. Where township and district work is done, the fellowship is still closer. The organized Sunday-school work in most of the states and provinces of North America is the most effective agency for the promotion of improved method. The remedy for any defects it may show is not to withhold coöperation but to come in and try to make the work better. Every county Sunday-school association is free to manage its own affairs; and the little Sunday schools have as good a right as any other party at interest to see that those affairs are managed well.

The little Sunday school should therefore regularly make its statistical report to the county Sunday-school association, accompanying or following this with its contribution for the county and state expense. If it does this, it will surely receive the notice of the county convention; and to this it should send every year a representative delegation.

Whether or not it succeeds in attaining all the points of its denominational or state standard, it will meet its neighbors, pick up points in conferences, learn new ways of solving old problems and lend its own good influence to help some less fortunate school.

This county Sunday-school relationship is a part of that community relationship which we are coming more and more to recognize as a potent force for social progress. The little Sunday school belongs to its community, and for its community it ought to live. Every home within its utmost parish limits, unless directly under some other spiritual care, should feel the effects of its efforts for good. Every evil that hurts the community's life should feel its practical opposition. Every movement for progress, material, social, intellectual or religious, should find it a helper and a friend. Let the city leaders learn by experience what the little Sunday school, when it enlists as a social force, can do.

Support.—Last among the items to be mentioned which this school needs for its work in the world is the item of support. How to get a good support for his struggling enterprise is our superintendent's ever-present problem.

First comes the matter of pupil-support. The little ones are all right. The boys and girls will usually stand by. But the young men and women are often careless; while the adult class members come when they please, and many who should be members never come at all. Why is this? John Wanamaker, a veteran Sunday-school worker as well as a merchant prince, once remarked, "If I found that a certain

class of my customers was falling off in its trade and leaving my store, I would never rest until I had found out why they left; and then I would make the changes needed to bring them back again." The school cannot run successfully without the hearty support of all classes of its pupils, old and young. If that is not given, it is the superintendent's duty, not to complain and recriminate, but to find out why, and then to make such changes as will win back the stragglers, gain new recruits and hold all firmly in line.

Then comes the support of the teachers. In a large school a careless teacher here and there can be offset by harder work in the department, until his resignation can be secured and a better worker installed. In a little school the full support of every teacher is a necessity. Let the superintendent first of all set his teachers an example of diligence and punctuality. Let him interest himself in the problems of each teacher in turn: he can do that in a little school. Once a month let him hold the stated meeting of the workers' conference, leading his teachers to God's throne in prayer for help, studying with them some line of helpful instruction and laying before them his own problems and plans for their advice and decision. Thus he makes the school their school; and we cannot help taking an interest in that which we feel to be our own.

The officers not teachers, and the presidents of the senior and adult classes, are also members of the workers' conference, and their support is to be sought and secured in much the same way. The support of the community will come in proportion as the

Sunday school shows such community spirit as is referred to above.

By far the most important support, and in many cases the hardest to get, is the support of the parents. Fathers and mothers want their children properly educated, and generally believe in the Sunday school as a good thing. But they seldom realize its true aims or appreciate just how and when their coöperation is most sorely needed. Sometimes the whole force of the home's influence seems to be thrown squarely against what the school stands for. When educational reforms are introduced, calling for harder work at home, they object. When they ought to come and see for themselves what the Sunday school is doing, they stay away. When they might plan their Sundays so as to bring the whole family to the Sunday school on time, they go visiting, or refuse to "hitch up." When the superintendent makes some mistake, or fails to please them, they criticize him before the children, whose confidence he must have, if he is ever to help them. When the Gospel has been preached with power and earnest young hearts want to stand up and confess their Saviour, how often has the parents' "Not yet; you are too young" blocked the way and left the lambs locked out of the fold within whose shelter they belong?

As before, however, we must not recriminate. How to get the parents' support is a part of our Sunday-school problem. If we have a definite idea of what we want the school to be, and our idea is educationally right, getting the parents to share that idea and join in the work of realizing it is simply a matter of patience, sympathy, advertising and prayer.

The active, intelligent support of the parents is valuable in many ways. It is the unconscious influence of the home, however, that really counts. Where interest in the wider life colors the talk at the breakfast table, where reverence for God's day, God's book and God's house shows in the family habits and actions, where things are valued by other than worldly standards, where prayer is no painful formality but the natural expression of the parents' attitude towards God, there the children will come to Sunday school as bearers of a spiritual force that will help to make the Sunday school go. Such children will eagerly want what the school has to give, and will give their own good influence in return. We have not many such homes; but it is part of our work to secure more.

It is usually the mother that makes the home. The Sunday school that holds, teaches, trains and transforms the children is the successful Sunday school. The Sunday school that has the homes firmly on its side for a wise program of religious education will hold, teach, train and transform the children. The Sunday school that converts the mothers to its ideals and lines them up for daily effort to bring these ideals to pass will have the homes as outstations, feeders of itself as the central enterprise. As we review the seven headings of this chapter, then, and note how their initials spell for us the word "mothers," let us take this, not as a mere device to aid the memory, but as embodying a fundamental secret of success in our work of soul-saving and life-training through the Sunday school.

II

MAKING A START

The Simple Start.—Starting a new Sunday school, or reviving an old one, is a comparatively simple process. The average Sunday-school missionary goes through with it from five to twenty times a year. The community is canvassed in the interest of the proposed organization and invited to a meeting. In the course of this canvass the organizer seeks for a likely man or woman for superintendent, with the needed teaching force; but he avoids any forestalling of the community's choice. The people know the dependable workers. At the meeting he presents the project and gets the interested ones to vote to have a Sunday school. He presides over the choice of superintendent and enough teachers to insure a good start. Pupils are enrolled and classes formed. Questions of time and place, name, denomination and lesson helps are raised and settled. A subscription is taken to pay for needed equipment. With a few parting instructions, and an appointment to visit the field soon again, the work is done.

There is nothing about a start like this that might not be done by the people themselves, if some one would take the lead. Many Sunday schools, indeed, are started every year by the spontaneous, consecrated effort of some earnest soul. In every state, at the office of the state Sunday-school association, in the

local and national Sunday-school headquarters of every denomination, and at the general and district offices of the American Sunday-School Union, are expert Sunday-school workers to whom a local Christain worker might confidently appeal for suggestions and at least moral support. If there ought to be a Sunday school in your neighborhood, or within your reach, and there is not, start one.

The possibilities of gain to Christ's cause from the starting of such a Sunday school are truly limitless. No imagination can foresee what the simple lessons there taught, with the worship and the sense of Christian fellowship and outlook, may mean to some of those boys and girls, or to some repressed and longing soul of maturer years. The little mission Sunday school has proved for many a golden gateway into a larger and more fruitful life.

The Educational Start.—This simple starting of a Sunday school on customary lines, with all its possibilities of happy outcome, is something quite different from the starting of a Sunday school, new or old, on a career of definite purpose in the religious education of the community. In the latter case our aim is not simply to reproduce customary method and so produce a "going concern," that will keep up its meetings and increase its interest and attendance, nor yet to add to this sundry modern improvements as called for in our Sunday-school standard, but rather to secure certain results. We have a vision of these individuals gathered, interested, taught, transformed, built up in character on Christ the Foundation of their lives, and released as agents in the renovation of the community. We see not only these results but

the successive steps by which they are to be secured. It is this educational start with which we are now chiefly concerned.

In the educational vision we get the perspective of the years. Not the mere succession of Sunday sessions interests us, but the slow and silent transformations that are to take place in the growing souls now enrolled in our classes. By a right arrangement of our forces we see their efficiency steadily increasing, and with it the school's influence over its members. As these grow towards maturity we see their loyalty returning to reënforce our staff, and their personality going out to enrich the community and the world.

Devices and methods, be they never so standard and modern, cannot make an educational Sunday school. It is not a question of lessons and machinery, but of what we are trying to do and by what steps we plan to do it. A purpose to win souls, and a clear perception of the steps by which souls are to be won, will make the crudest of beginnings educational. As for the Holy Spirit's power, all of us rely on Him; but some look for Him to work outside of and beyond their efforts, others within and through them.

Remaking an Old School.—In any Sunday school which has been running for some years, the reformer must beware of so breaking with the past that the asset of the members' good habits shall be lost in the transition. Rather should he seek to let the new grow out of the old, always managing to keep the larger part of his organization going on in the accustomed way. He must not be afraid of being called inconsistent. Neither must he yield to the

insistence of this or that zealous specialist, until he sees that the enterprise as a whole is ready for the particular improvement recommended.

To play this part successfully, however, the superintendent must have his vision; else will he simply be one of the ten thousand old fogies who hold tight the doors of their little Sunday schools against the entrance of reform. He must be able to see that particular school of his as it will look when reconstructed for true educational service. He must be able, too, to see the product of his school shaping itself in tangible results year after year, as the good work grows better and one success opens the way for another.

The great lack in the rural field is usually competent leaders. The personal factors of each local situation must determine what to do first and what next. The situation as we find it will determine the method of our educational start. But it must not be allowed to warp and limit our plans for the final arrangement; nor must we let any difficulties, however great, becloud the clear outlines of our vision.

The five classes of the standard little-school plan have been described in Chapter I. So far as that plan is not now the plan of the school, the needed work is clear. Let the superintendent, alone or with the help of one or more sympathetic fellow-reformers, take the list of the classes as they stand and draw up another list of the same pupils as they would be if arranged in classes according to the scheme outlined. What transfers will this involve? By what moves may these transfers be effected? If the ambition to have a thoroughly

modern school, giving to every pupil a first-rate religious education, were properly presented, would not the school respond and endorse the movement? If then it were announced that a few transfers were necessary, in order to put the school into good shape educationally, would not most of the members stand ready for their orders? If the list were next read, and if the classes to which the transferees are to come were ready with an invitation and a welcome, would not enough respond and go to insure the success of the plan? One or two might doggedly resist: the cases of these might then be publicly postponed for a month, during which the needed missionary work could be done. Too many schools have tried and succeeded in reorganizations of this sort for any leader to say that it cannot be done. But there may be a better way for this school than that here outlined.

Suppose there are not five teachers, what then? That brings us to the great law of educational reorganization: Begin at the bottom and organize up. If you can have five classes, let them be primary, junior, intermediate, senior and adult. If but four, drop the senior class, merging it with the adults. If but three, make them primary, junior and adult. If but two, throw the children of eleven and younger in with the primary children and have a primary or rather an elementary class and an adult class. In each of these cases except the last, make the work of each class as nearly as possible what it should be for pupils of the standard ages for that class. Sacrifice something of what the older ones should get, if you must, but keep the work for the younger children

all that it ought to be. Some of the needs of the older ones can be covered in other ways. By following this principle we prepare for the future. Every year's growth of the children brings us that much nearer our educational goal. Have a well graded school, therefore, for the youngest children; and from that starting-point have good grading as far up as you can now go.

Insuring Permanence.—In building a home in the forest it might be possible to find four trees growing in such a position that their trunks would do for the corner timbers of the house. Why should not the pioneer follow such a plan? Because the trees are alive. They seem fixed and stable to the eye; but he knows that their steady growth would erelong throw his house out of plumb. Now that is just what happens in a Sunday school whenever organization is effected without providing for the element of living growth on the part of the children. The classes may be all right now; but in a year or two the arrangement will be out of plumb.

Once a year, therefore, the school must reorganize, so as to bring it back to the form it held when the year began. Only a few, it may be, will be affected; but next year there will be a few more, and so on until all are shifted to new positions. If these changes are made arbitrarily they will be resented, and there will be various kinds of trouble. But if the school can be made to see what the changes mean, and how, by making them steadily, year after year, each class is kept at the one place in the school, doing its work better and better as the years go by, opposition will soon turn into enthusiasm.

Promotion Sunday is the usual name for the day when these changes are made. It might be held at any time in the year; and in itself it has nothing to do with the use of graded lessons. If you have organized a class of children whose ages run from nine to twelve, and if you want to keep your school so organized that the pupils from nine to twelve will always be in that class and under that teacher, then you must keep putting in the nine-year-olds and taking out the thirteen-year-olds, must you not? Then, no matter what lessons your junior teacher uses, he will every year be more of an expert in the handling and teaching of junior children. But if you fail to make these annual promotions and changes, he will get no chance to practice on one group after another, but will be carried along by the growth of his children till he finds himself teaching not juniors but intermediates; and they, as many have learned to their sorrow, are a different proposition altogether.

The only way to carry through a promotion plan the first year is to have it in mind from the beginning, and to make clear to all just what it will involve. Settle therefore at once how the school year is to run. The graded lesson courses all begin on the first Sunday in October; and as you will surely be using them some time if not ready to do so now, you will do well to fall in line with the great majority of graded Sunday schools and fix your Promotion Sunday on the last Sunday of September. Let that be the school's annual commencement, the close of its scholastic year. Let it be agreed on and announced long in advance. On that day the classes will be reorganized by promotion, to bring them back to the

age-limit and plan of grades which we intend to maintain as the plan of this school.[1]

If some few individuals, at the time of starting the new plan, should refuse to be transferred so as to enable the graded classes to be properly formed, and if the month of delay and friendly reasoning, as proposed, should fail to move them, it would be proper to let them stay in their former places until the next Promotion Sunday, they taking full responsibility for their position. By that time the good sense of the new methods will have been shown; and with others moving up to claim the honors of promotion, and younger children coming in, the tide of influence will be too strong for the objectors to resist. Experience on this point shows that reasonably good graded work seldom fails to make converts if given a few months' time.

What to Teach.—For more than a generation the American Sunday school had the question of what lessons to teach taken entirely off its hands. Among the little schools particularly, the only lesson in sight was the International Uniform Lesson. There was a choice indeed between the lesson papers of this or that publisher, between the use of denominational helps or those of some independent house, and between the cheap lesson leaves in all the classes and the more costly quarterlies, graded to fit the needs of senior, intermediate, junior and primary pupils. There were also special helps which might or might not be used. But there was never a question that on a given Sunday, in any class, the lesson would be

[1] For the description of a plan for conducting this promotion service, see Chapter VI, p. 104.

other than "David Brings the Ark to Zion," or whatever the uniform lesson for that Sunday might be.

Now, however, the little Sunday school finds itself compelled to face the question, What lessons shall we teach in our classes? There are graded lessons to consider as well as the uniform lesson; and both systems are International. The graded system, it seems, calls for seventeen lessons to be taught at once in the same school. The text-books are quite unlike those on the uniform system and much more expensive. What should a little Sunday school do in so bewildering a situation? To hold on to the good old uniform Bible lesson until clearly shown a better way is for the average little school unquestionably the wise course to pursue.

But the school must hold itself ready to be shown. The uniform lessons are good; but the graded lessons when properly handled may be better. The real question is, What do we need to teach these children? Lessons are a means, not an end. A school is not made better by introducing graded lessons as a fad, or to gain credit somewhere; it may easily be made worse. Let us try to free our minds of preconception on this whole lesson question, and simply ask, as to each of our five newly graded classes, What ought this teacher to be given as the lesson course for this class?

Educational Lessons.—For the adult class, in most little schools, there will be small need to raise the question. They are now following the uniform lesson and getting from their weekly discussions of the assigned Bible passage as much good as they

would be likely to get from any other course that their teacher could handle. Let this good work therefore go on for the rest of the year. There are indeed courses for progressive adult classes that want to get at modern topics like the liquor question, the duties of parents or the social teachings of the Bible, or that prefer the direct and continuous study of one Bible book to the selected passage system of the uniform course. A committee of the class, with the teacher, might investigate possibilities on this line for consideration as plans are made for the new school year. Meanwhile let every effort be made to get more out of the weekly Bible study on the old accustomed line.

Much the same is true of the senior class. For young men and women there is now available even a wider range of lesson choices than for adults. Possibly they might be willing to follow a training course, all joining in class study and those who so chose enrolling and taking the examinations. They would work as hard in a singing class or in the games and sports at a young people's social : why not go in with equal zest for a diploma and some accurate knowledge of the Bible and how to teach it? Then there are books on mission study, presenting the lives of famous workers who did great things for Jesus, that would keep the class inspired for three months with a glowing sense of the reality of their religion, and that would send them back to their Bible lessons prepared to get new and deeper meanings from its sacred words. But if these and other proposals do not as yet seem feasible, do not force them. Go on with the uniform senior Bible lesson ; but help the teacher to

make it more practical and to give the young folks a better chance to take part in the discussion.

The intermediate class presents the hardest problem of the school. Between twelve and sixteen the boys and girls are passing through the period of early adolescence. It is not easy to interest them in any line of study. They want to talk about everything on earth but the lesson, and to do anything except what the school, the teacher and their parents wish.

Splendid graded lessons are ready for the intermediate class, if it is ready for the lessons. These lessons, however, like lessons in the high school, presuppose other lessons already learned in the grades below. If the teacher of this class feels equal to new and difficult work in lesson planning; if he has the class so well in hand that they will do some Bible studying at home; and particularly if the pupils are already fairly well taught in the stories and facts as to the great Bible characters in the Old Testament, the first year Intermediate lessons may be introduced at the beginning of any quarter. Where these conditions are not fulfilled, it will be best at the start to go on with the uniform lesson in the intermediate class.

Now comes the junior class. What do the boys and girls from nine to twelve most need to learn in the Sunday school? Obedience, says one much-tried worker. Reverence, insists another. Knowledge of the Bible, says a third. The way to God, some thoughtful soul may softly say. Young as they are, declares still another, they are sinners: what they need is to find Christ their Saviour and give their hearts to Him.

And then comes a multitude of further suggestions,

each with much in its favor. Teach them the catechism. Let them sign the temperance pledge and learn what it means. Teach them missions. Get them into the habit of going regularly to church. Make them systematic givers. Good citizenship, peace, purity, charity for the poor, care for the birds and for dumb animals—these and many other lines of teaching and training have been urged for junior children; and somewhere a society can be found ardently at work lining up the children for the cause. Some of these teachings are proposed for the Sunday school, some for junior societies, leagues and bands, some for the public school; but if the teaching is needed by these children, it is proper to consider whether it should or should not be taught in our junior class.

What are we trying to teach them now? A series of lessons from the Bible. Is next Sunday's selection the best choice of Bible matter that could possibly be made for a junior class? Does it lay a foundation of Bible knowledge on which the later lessons in this and the higher courses can build? Are the children learning to use their Bibles? Is their interest in Bible study increasing? Of all those matters that we saw proposed for their learning, how much is now being reached under these lessons? What they are now learning may be good in itself, and in relation to our convenience in the handling of it; but is it good in relation to their need?

The junior International graded lesson course is four years long. The first year's course begins with the Creation and runs through nine months to the death of Moses; then it spends eight weeks with

Jesus, learning some of the stories He told to illustrate His teachings, and closes with four weeks of map-lessons on the journeys of Moses and his last vision of the Promised Land. Every lesson is a good Bible story for pupils of nine or ten, but can be made interesting also to the older members. Each requires the use of the Bible: the lessons are not printed in the pupil's book, but answers to the questions must be written there. The work thus gives that familiarity with the Bible as a book which the pupil needs for his later studies. The stories of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, with their reverent sense of God's presence and their ready obedience to His commands, are well fitted to teach those virtues that junior children need to learn.

These junior graded lessons, therefore, are what the class needs to learn; at least they are the best that we are likely to find in the Sunday-school market. But the teacher needs to learn how to teach them. To one who has taught only the uniform lessons they represent an entirely different idea of what a Sunday-school lesson is. A good day school teacher could take the text-books and be ready in a week to begin work. She knows how to plan a recitation and how to set her pupils at work embodying their new knowledge in hand-made exercises. She also, probably, knows how to tell a story so as to convey a moral without having to tack the moral on. The untrained Sunday-school teacher will probably need a month or two of advance study before being ready to begin the lessons with the junior class.

The primary teacher needs a graded lesson even more than the junior teacher does. She has often

found it hard to make the day's lesson seem even intelligible, much less interesting and profitable, to her little ones. Memory work, therefore, has been her favorite exercise. Even an untrained teacher can take the beautiful stories and pictures of the primary International graded lessons and make more of them than of the uniform lessons. Give her therefore the sample set of pupil's folders and the teacher's manual of the first year primary course; let her study them diligently during the weeks remaining to the end of the present quarter, teaching on her former plan meanwhile. Then, on the first Sunday of the next quarter, let her begin in the new way.

In ordering the supplies for this graded work remember that all these graded lessons are numbered from 1 to 52, beginning with the first Sunday in October. If the work is to begin on that Sunday, order Part I, including Lessons 1 to 13. If it is to begin on the first Sunday of January—a very poor time to begin—order Part II, Lessons 14 to 26; and so with Part III and Part IV. The teacher's manual for the first part in each course contains the explanatory "Foreword" for the year. In the advance buying for the teacher, it is therefore better to procure one copy of the teacher's manual for all four parts and one set of the pupil's folders or books for the year, so that the year's work can be studied as a whole. The supplies will all be used sooner or later, even if the class is to begin in the middle of the year.

These explanations refer to the "closely graded" or original form of the International graded lesson issues. The same lessons are also issued departmentally, in serial form like the uniform lesson quarter-

lies. As so issued, each lesson is dated and not numbered. To carry out the former suggestions it would simply be necessary for the school to subscribe for one copy each of the primary and junior lesson issues for the remainder of the calendar year. The departmental lessons are issued by certain of the denominational Sunday-school houses. They were so prepared to fit the needs of the little school, where but one lesson at a time can be taught in the junior or the primary class; whereas the closely graded lessons are meant to be taught to all grades in separate classes side by side, a lesson to a year. Both forms of lesson arrangement are in successful use in hundreds of little Sunday schools.

The New Plan at Work.—The month or two before the starting time, during which the teachers were studying their new text-books and making their plans, has gone by. The changes and shifts needed to secure a properly graded set of classes have been made. On the appointed Sunday, the first of the quarter, the new lessons began. The school has been running on an educational basis for two or three weeks. About this time an intelligent visitor drops in. Of course he asks, "How are your new plans working?"

Theoretically, the answer ought to be, "Splendidly!" The primary teacher should beam with joy as she turns from her fascinated circle of little ones; and they should join her in the chorus, holding up their folders to show the pretty pictures they have drawn about the beautiful stories that she has been telling them. The juniors should likewise respond heartily, producing their books with the pictures properly pasted in, the memory texts correctly written, and

every answer-blank filled with brief and scrawly lesson wisdom. Each child should also display his own Bible and be able to show the verses in Genesis that he read at home last week as his lesson book directed. In the intermediate class, if that also began the new work, a good account of Abraham's life and character should be forthcoming. The older classes should report a more earnest grip on their lesson tasks. A quiet spirit of purposefulness should pervade the school.

Exactly such results, with many other equally encouraging features, have actually been secured in many newly graded little Sunday schools, according to the reports of elementary workers familiar with their fields. Such a response is what may reasonably be expected when all the necessary conditions of success have been met. This is the "bogey score" of the grading game, the advertised maximum output of the new machine. The fact that you or I cannot make such a record the first time we try is no proof that the course is bad and the advertisement a swindle: it only shows that we have not yet learned the game.

If the superintendent and his teachers have never tried this kind of work before, they must expect to make many mistakes, and, in consequence, to meet many difficulties. The smooth sailing that was expected may be months ahead, with stormy seas between. But if the leader has the vision, success is sure; and if careful preparation is made before the start is attempted, and the little company of workers is loyal and in earnest, in a few weeks the time of struggle will be over, and the results of a wiser lesson method will begin to appear.

III

INCREASED ATTENDANCE

A Laudable Ambition.—The primal instinct of every healthy Sunday school is to grow. It may be only a little school now; but it does not intend to stay little. It wants every new member it can get; and from time to time it lays plans and starts a campaign of increase. A school that does not actively try to grow larger is very likely to grow smaller; for the older ones in such a school are liable to drop out faster than the younger ones come in.

In most American communities, also, there is a certain amount of movement among the population. Some of the best workers and their children remove to other fields, generally the city, and newcomers take their place. These newcomers seldom seek the Sunday school; they must be sought and won. If the Sunday school is not ambitious to grow in numbers, the motive power necessary for this winning process will be lacking.

Newcomers, however, are not the only available source of new members. It is a sparsely settled region indeed, or else a sadly overchurched one, where there are not some people in the community, and even some children, who ought to be in our Sunday school and are not. Some of these are former members who have dropped from the ranks, not because the school has finished its work for them, and

they their work for the school, but merely because the school has failed to meet their needs. The people who feel that attending Sunday school is worth their while do not drop out; and all but the young children are likely to settle that question for themselves.

The school therefore should labor to bring in these outsiders. At the same time it should seek to understand why they left, and should plan to make it thoroughly worth while for every one of them to return. Every failure is a lesson.

Retention and Graduation.—Back of all plans to bring in, of course, must be the plan to keep in. It is much easier to make it worth a pupil's while to stay than to make it worth an outsider's while to come; for the pupil is already with us, one of our force, able to show us what he wants if we have the sense to learn it from him. The wise superintendent is constantly studying his school, observing what bores them and what arouses their appreciation or their enthusiasm. The educational policy must also be a popular policy, or its failure is sure.

That idea of the Sunday school's finishing its work for anybody may strike some as preposterous. In a broad sense indeed it is true: there will always be a benefit yet to be received by continued attendance. But why should not the studies of the Sunday school lead to a definite conclusion? If the Sunday school is to be a school, it must have a course of study. In a course of study, however long, there comes somewhere a graduation. The ideal Sunday school, large or small, will have a graduation time for its graded pupils, after which they will have the option of continuing their graded studies in the training class, or

taking ungraded work in the general adult class, or going to work in one of the Sunday-school offices.

Dangers in Numbers.—Just as paying out fresh string makes the kite drop, and putting in more potatoes makes the pot stop boiling, so a rapid influx of new members is liable to interrupt the steady educational progress of the Sunday school. A meeting for worship and speaking is helped by increase of numbers. Let them come until there is standing room only: the greater the crowd, the deeper the interest, and the better the speaker will talk. But a school is not so affected. Each teacher's work is planned for a certain number of pupils, seated in a certain way. When the class swells beyond its proper limit, it becomes unmanageable. When several classes are so swelled, the whole teaching plan breaks down. The unruly ones take advantage of the crowd to start disorder. The teacher's voice and reach will not carry to the outer edge of the class circle; voices are raised till one class interferes with another; and the only recourse is to turn the school into a meeting, start a song and proceed to work as a meeting and not as a school. Many a revival has played havoc for a time with good school work in just this way.

Along with plans to win new members, therefore, must always go plans for handling them after they are won. If five new pupils are coming next Sunday, there ought to be five places ready to receive them. Greetings, confusion and shuffling of seats to make room for newcomers must not be allowed to subtract from the value of the day's lesson to those who are entitled to an unbroken lesson chance every Sunday in the year. A visitors' bench or set of chairs near

the door is a necessary piece of equipment for any up-to-date Sunday school, and a superintendent or associate ready to greet and assign the new recruits is a necessary officer.

Rewards, Wise and Otherwise.—In the laudable ambition to grow in numbers, many devices have been made use of, some of which have been widely advertised among the smaller schools. Rewards are given for bringing in new pupils. Sometimes a prize is offered to the one who brings in the most new pupils. The school is divided into two sections, the reds and the blues, and a contest is instituted to see which side will gather in the most recruits by a certain time. Organized classes in neighboring schools challenge each other to contests and make all sorts of efforts in the work of rounding up a crowd that will beat their opponents. The zeal and energy shown in these enterprises is worthy of high praise. The getting of new hearers within reach of gospel influence is in itself greatly to be desired. What shall we say as to the wisdom of such efforts on the whole?

In order to meet this question fairly and settle it adequately, it will be necessary to take up the whole subject of rewards as a means of character-culture. We desire the attendance of these outsiders that we may save them from sin and build up their character in the graces of the Christian life. Rewards affect attendance and statistics; but they also affect individual character. Let us consider that phase of the subject first.

Motives are either external or internal. An internal motive for an action is one that springs out of the action itself. I do a kind deed, and my con-

science commends me. Perhaps the recipient is appreciative. The results of my action make me feel glad that I overcame my hesitation and did the deed; and next time the opportunity presents itself I will probably do it again. In such a case I am moved by an inner connection between the act and my feeling of satisfaction following the act. My motive is internal.

Having done the good act, I go home and tell my mother about it. She smiles and commends me. Her approval blends with the approval of my own conscience and so strengthens my internal motive to do kind deeds. If she does no more than commend and smile, I will go on in the strength of my own internal motive, which will gradually grow stronger till kindness becomes the law of my life, independently of what my mother or any one else may think or say.

But suppose my mother gives me ten cents for being so kind, and promises a like reward for every similar act. That ten cents, representing to me candy, or "the movies," or what not, constitutes an external motive, having no relation whatever to my feelings of honest satisfaction with myself for doing a good deed. In fact, it tends to crowd out and obliterate such feelings. I am out for money now, and have no time to be sentimental. Neither does the offer of the ten cents blend with my own feelings as the smile did. It comes indeed from my mother's good heart; but I do not realize that. All I see is a chance to make ten cents. Out I go, watching with a newsboy's eye for the next ten cents' worth of opening to do a kind deed. She might have made me a philanthropist:

what she has done is to start me on my way to being a skinflint and a grafting politician.[1]

Now let us apply this distinction between inner and outer connection to the matter of rewards for securing new pupils. The application is also, of course, to rewards to the new pupils for coming to school, or to old pupils for staying, or indeed to the whole round of book-giving and pin-bestowing of which our Sunday-school methods are so full. The fact that it may be a Bible we give does not put a better face on the matter.

Every reward that lies outside the real nature of the deed done is a hindrance to the growth of good character. Drugs and chemicals, even active poisons, may make good medicine when administered to meet a special and morbid condition. The offer of a reward to incite to good work may similarly, at a particular juncture, be wise policy in Sunday school. But to rely on the practice regularly, as so many superintendents do, is like living on medicine instead of cultivating natural health. The educational Sunday school makes its work its own reward and at every point reduces external motive to the smallest amount possible.

Instead, then, of any of these mechanical and dangerous devices, cultivate school spirit, loyalty, enthusiasm. Instead of playing the reds against the blues, dividing the forces when they are already so prone to divide on any trifling pretext, play the school against the outsiders. Get a school banner; or still better, let the boys furnish the sticks and the

[1] See Elizabeth Harrison's "A Study of Child Nature," pp. 129, 130, for a story illustrating this point.

rigging and the girls hold a sewing bee to embroider or sew on the letters and fringe, and make your own banner, the most gorgeous the county has ever seen. Adopt school colors; rehearse a school yell; wear a school badge. If the fraternal orders can make insurance capital out of regalia, titles and degrees, why should the Sunday school spend its money for rewards when it can get better results by far out of a little "ginger" and enthusiasm?

Campaign methods, however, are suggested merely as a possible substitute for less desirable devices. We have not attained to the natural method in educational hygiene until the daily work of the Sunday school becomes itself the reward relied on to hold fast those now in and to attract those still outside. Every step detailed in this book for improving the class work and giving it a better grip on the life of pupils and teachers is also a step in the work of enlarging and steadying attendance. No item more regularly recurs in the reports of work in graded Sunday schools than that of improved regularity and increased attendance as a result of having lessons to study and teach that are definite, progressive and worth while.

At the same time we must not forget the part that was played in our illustration by the mother's smile. The Sunday school must care and take notice when its members do praiseworthy things. If this care is expressed in wisely planned records, painstakingly kept and regularly reported, and if this notice is taken officially, in the shape of some simple system of honors and recognitions, the results will fully equal anything ever secured through costly reward sys-

tems; and the effect on character will be good instead of evil.[1]

New Classes.—In war, in football, in business and in Sunday-school management, good tactics include a determined holding of the initiative. As Ben Franklin put it in his Poor Richard's Almanac, "Drive thy work; let not that drive thee." For growth in numbers, therefore, the superintendent, as already stated, must be ready. We have already seen how the two-class school should organize, and what steps it should take in growing up to the standard five-class plan.[2] By what further steps should it grow from fifty to one hundred members? It will take ten teachers to care for a school of that size: how should these five new classes successively be formed?

To a visitor trained in modern methods of Sunday-school organization, the idea of running a whole Sunday school with only five teachers seems shocking. To throw together in one class not only all three grades of the primary children, but even the beginners, is a sin. To the city junior leader, also, four grades in one junior class seems subversive of all effective grading. To the secondary worker the putting of older boys and girls in the same class is all wrong: the sexes should be taught separately. When these exponents of a city-made ideal are cornered by the rural delegates at a county convention and asked what they would do if five classes were all they had and all they had any prospect of having, they usually express sympathy for those so unfortunately situated, deal out a few generalities, and take up another topic.

[1] For a working system of records, reports and recognitions, see Chapter V.

[2] Chapter II, p. 30.

The present writer confesses with shame that for many years, as a state Sunday-school general secretary, something very like this was his practice.

Now we must stand together for the proposition that good educational work can be done with but five classes; and this book is an honest effort to show how it can be done. But we must also recognize the truth in these experts' claim of the great desirability of closer grading when it can be had. The wise superintendent of the little Sunday school, therefore, will be proud of his five classes, watchful of their educational welfare, and hopeful of the results to be secured through his teachers' efforts; and at the same time he will plan with care the steps he intends to take for the spreading out of his grades, as soon as enlarging numbers make that possible.

Beyond the five-class structure already set forth, three additional classes are greatly needed. Which shall be formed first will depend for the most part on the supply of teachers qualified to do good work after being shown how, and also on the points in the school where the need for change seems most urgent. The steps to be taken in forming these new classes are:

1. The organizing of a beginners' class out of the general primary class, by separating the children under six and giving them a teacher of their own. This work, indeed, may be started whenever an assistant can be found, as was stated on page 11. As always, the age-rules are subject to exception: it is mental capacity that should really determine our grading, with some regard also to physical development. For this class a teacher may be found among the mothers, or developed by drafting one of the

young women from the senior class as primary assistant and after a few weeks promoting her to full charge of the new class. A screened or curtained corner should be given whenever possible, with small chairs or low seats. The Beginners' Graded Lessons furnish simple and beautiful stories and pictures which even an untrained teacher can present and explain.

2. The separating of the younger and older juniors. If two junior classes can be formed, let one consist of boys and girls of nine and ten, the other of boys and girls of eleven and twelve. At this age the sexes, while preferring to play apart, are together in school and home and can be successfully worked in the same class, as two crowds studying together.

3. The separating of the intermediate boys and the intermediate girls. Entrance on the period of adolescence gives rise to a long series of what are called secondary sexual instincts, in which the youth acts in relation to the other sex without realizing what force it is which moves him to his apparently unaccountable conduct and state of mind. Regard for personal appearance, for instance, may develop almost over night, to the amazement of the mother, whose precepts about a clean face and tidy garments have heretofore fallen on deaf ears. It is hard enough to handle these early adolescents even in separate classes, so strong and erratic are the impulses that move them ; and in a mixed class things are liable to be even worse. Nevertheless, the need of graded instruction for these dear, foolish, splendid boys and girls in this very period is so great, and the instruction they need is so vastly diverse from that needed by the sober, thoughtful, socially established

young men and women of the middle and later adolescent periods (sixteen to nineteen, nineteen to twenty-four), that if we can have but two classes between thirteen and twenty-four, one should surely be an intermediate class and one a senior. The senior young men and women may continue to study together, as they meet together for prayer and service in their young people's society. We can afford to postpone that division till the school is considerably larger. But the two intermediate classes should be formed without a week's unnecessary delay.

If the growth in numbers still continues, the next two steps will be the similar dividing between the boys and girls of the older junior class, where the sex instincts are already beginning to make themselves felt, and the dividing of the adult class into a class for men and a class for women. This last is desirable simply because adult life in its interests and mental habits diverges strongly on sex lines, and the adult students can get far more practical value out of their weekly lesson discussions if they are not confined to questions and subject-matter interesting to both sides.

A Table of Growth.—Putting these and the earlier suggestions into tabular form, we may think of the educational little Sunday school as a "modern improvement" offered in four sizes:

SIZE A.—*Two classes, twenty members.*

Primary Class	General Class
Pupils of 11 and under.	Children above 11 and adults.

Superintendent teaches general class, using Uniform Lessons.

Primary teacher uses Primary Graded Lessons, with Bible work for older pupils.

SIZE B.—*Five classes, fifty members.*

Primary Class	Junior Class	Intermediate Class
8 and under	9 to 12	13 to 16 or 17
Primary G. L.	Junior G. L.	U. L. now; Int. G. L.
Asst. for Beg.		next year.

Senior Class	Adult Class
17 or 18 to 23 or 24	Over 24
U. L. or elective.	U. L. or elective.

Two officers, superintendent and secretary-treasurer-librarian; five teachers.

SIZE C.—*Eight classes, seventy-five or eighty members.*

Beginners' Class	Primary Class	First Junior Class
3, 4 and 5	6, 7 and 8	9 and 10
Beginners' G. L.	Primary G. L.	Junior G. L., 1st and 2d years.

Second Junior Class	Intermediate Boys
11 and 12	13 to 16 or 17
Junior G. L., 3rd and 4th years.	Intermediate G. L.

Intermediate Girls	Senior Class	Adult Class
12 or 13 to 16 or 17	17 or 18 to 23 or 24	Over 24
Intermediate G. L.	U. L. or elective.	U. L. or elective.

Superintendent, secretary and one or two other officers, with eight teachers.

SIZE D.—*Ten classes, one hundred members.*

First three classes same as in Size C; but use assistants as needed.
Divide Second Junior Class, boys and girls.
Divide Adult Class, men and women.
Promote one of the juvenile assistants to be teacher, and take the best of the elementary teachers for Elementary Superintendent, in charge of beginners, primary and junior work.
Increase above this size takes the Sunday school out of the number of those considered in this book.

Winning New Pupils.—At no point has the little Sunday school more of an advantage over the big school than in the work of winning new pupils. In city campaigning our efforts are for strangers, people

we do not yet know. In the country every possible new pupil is already known and can be worked for as an individual. With this tactical advantage, the country school ought with the same amount of effort to break the city school's record every time.

The methods of course will sharply diverge. The city worker's model is the great advertiser, who first has something good to sell and then prints his selling talk so large and sends it forth so widely that if only one in a hundred heeds and buys, his fortune is made. That is the best he can do to meet the handicap of vast numbers of indifferent and preoccupied people. The country worker is relieved of this handicap; and therefore he needs a different model to pattern from. His proper model is the life insurance agent. Not by broadcast appeals, but by the listing of individual "prospects" and steady personal follow-up work, are recruits to be gathered for the little school.

Regularly, once a year, a campaign for increasing the Sunday school's membership should be begun. Late summer will in most rural neighborhoods be the best time to start this, for then the school is at its best and the slim attendances of midwinter need to be forestalled by adding new names to the roll. The graded lessons, also, are nearing the close of their current years, and Promotion Day, the last Sunday in September, will give the chance to rearrange classes and properly bestow the new recruits.

Let the leaders in conference, then, look over the situation. Ask first, What can be done to make the school sessions more forceful and inspiring? Mere amusement is a weak attraction. Purposefulness, brevity, force, spiritual earnestness, consideration for

the ambitions and interests of the classes, the rigid cutting out of every word of platform talk not absolutely needed to carry out the school's plan—these features will count for far more. Frank criticism by each in turn, with suggestions for improvement, should be called for, and new features and lines of effort planned for the Sundays to follow.

Next ask, What general influences are keeping any in our community away? There may be some state of feeling so deep-seated that only by a large and carefully planned movement can it be neutralized and overcome. Who are the strategic personal factors whom we ought to secure? Frequently one man or woman, sometimes one boy or older girl, is a leader, and by holding aloof is blocking the way for others whom we have long courted in vain. The first step is to recognize the actual situation and talk it frankly over. The second is to agree on what ought not to be done. It would be easy by a few false steps to make the chance to win such a one much poorer than it is now. The third is to pray together for courage, light and the power of God's Spirit on the opposing hearts. Then let the quiet work of canvassing for some one of these strategic outsiders begin.

In his "Yale Lectures on the Sunday School," page 202 f., Dr. H. Clay Trumbull thus describes the work of a New England country superintendent whom he knew:

"The superintendent of this Sunday school had no . . . special fitness for his place, save a quiet, earnest persistency of purpose. He was lacking in personal magnetism, and was slow and heavy in his manners. His Sunday school was a small one,

having, say, forty or fifty scholars, when he was chosen as its superintendent. He wanted the school membership increased; but he knew of no other way of bringing this about, except by going for one person at a time and sticking at him until he had him in as a scholar. He fastened his eyes, for example, on 'Squire Brown, who ought to be in Sunday school on his own account, and as a means of bringing others in. He invited 'Squire Brown, accordingly, to join one of the Bible classes. Then he asked 'Squire Brown's wife to urge her husband to accept his invitation. If this was not sufficient, he had 'Squire Brown's children ask their father to come to their Sunday school. Then, perhaps, he induced other members of the Bible class to join in the same request; and he went to the pastor to have him say a word in that direction to 'Squire Brown. This work was followed up untiringly, as though the superintendent were really living only to the end of seeing 'Squire Brown in the Sunday school. When 'Squire Brown finally came in, as he was pretty sure to do, there was at once another outsider—from the congregation or in the field beyond it—on whom the superintendent's eye was fixed; and the same process was repeated with him.

"This was slow work, but it was sure work, and it was a work which any determined man can do. As the superintendent grew gray in the service, the membership of his Sunday school was enlarged. At last he had one hundred and fifty persons in that school, a number equal to fully nine-tenths of the entire congregation; and the Sunday school was called the "Banner Sunday school" of the county.

It had evangelized a large portion of the country population of its township, while it had quickened the life of the church of which it was a part; and it had illustrated a work which ought to be going on in every country township of America."

Without waiting until the 'Squire or any other important personage has thus been won over, let the general campaign go on. Speak from the desk of the need that every member of the school, large and small, shall be a missionary. Let each class devote five minutes to the compilation of a written list of possible new members for that class; names of those reachable but properly assignable to another class being so marked. If pencils and pads for this work are distributed, it will lend seriousness to the task. Let the lists thus drawn up be gone over by a canvassing committee, in order that each class may be definitely assigned certain individuals whom it is to bring in, having them present if possible next Sunday. Where the field is shared with other evangelical Sunday schools, steps should of course be taken to forestall attempts at proselyting. If possible, let all the schools unite in one concerted appeal. Close the preparatory exercise with earnest prayer for those we desire to reach, and for those who will try this week to win them.

Gospel Salesmanship.—A good follow-up talk for the Sunday after this start will be a little lesson on the principles of salesmanship. Books, sewing-machines, life insurance and the blessings of Sunday-school attendance are sold under the same set of rules; for in each case we are dealing with human nature. The "prospect" must be persuaded to give up some-

thing of value to him—his Sunday nap, maybe—in exchange for the goods we have to offer. By the rules of selling science the canvasser has these four things to do :

1. Secure the prospect's favorable attention. We must make him and his our friends (Acts xii. 20). He must be in such an attitude towards us that anything we may propose he will feel like doing.

2. Gain his interest. We must have a story to tell that will make him listen, ask questions, revolve our words in his own mind. Anything in the Sunday school's work that is new, creditable and surprising will make good selling talk, if it is on a line that will probably appeal to him. Something that a class or a pupil did well would be interesting to one of the same age. Some feature that greatly interests the canvasser is likely to prove interesting to the one to whom it is enthusiastically described. An exhibit that can be shown to the eye is sure to interest if properly explained.

3. Arouse his desire. This interest must be led rapidly to the point where the prospect will want to share in these good times, these interesting and instructive lessons, these spiritually searching and moving talks, prayers and songs, these helpful class activities for Jesus. As the Japanese schoolgirls in a government school said when they heard of the movement for united Sunday-school work in that beautiful land, "Where so much that is grand and noble is being undertaken, shall we be left out?" Take high ground : appeal to the deep desire of every soul, even of wayward boys and girls, for higher and better things. But desire for social pleasure, com-

panionship, music, pictures, books to read, artistic hand-work to try one's skill on—these reasonable desires must be played upon also. Exhaust every legitimate device to make the prospect want to come.

4. Lead him to action. As the good housekeeper hovers over her syrup, to note the precise moment when the deep-colored, steaming pailful of deliciousness is ready to "jell"; as the angler eyes his bobbing cork, with his eager fingers clutching the still motionless rod; so must the canvasser watch his prospect for the moment when desire should crystallize itself in action, and be ready with his proposition. Just what is done is mere detail. Shaking hands on the promise to come to school next Sunday is the simplest substitute for the "sign here" of the wily agent. But some definite committal there must be; and it must be followed up at once in such a way as to close the loophole of changed mind and re-decision. Let the canvasser report immediately his success to the superintendent or the teacher; and let the prospect's next mail contain a letter of welcome, with some arrangement regarding the new member's presence and place in school next Sunday. To make the newcomer feel, "I must be there; they are expecting me," is obvious wisdom.

While these canvassing methods are primarily for the securing of pupils rather than teachers and officers, it will often happen that among the listed prospects is some one whom the superintendent covets for a certain place in the working force. For several reasons it is usually wise first to bring in such a person as a member of the adult or senior class, or perhaps as a temporary helper without responsi-

bility. Let the recruit first qualify as a private before receiving his officer's commission. At the celebration of the semi-centennial of the Pennsylvania Railroad, a high officer of that great system declared that in all its fifty years the railroad had never hired a conductor or an engineer or a superintendent. Every one had been raised from the ranks. If a strong and hearty school spirit is needful to the success of the little Sunday school, here is a good way to insure its development and preservation.

The Extension Departments.—If the Sunday school is to serve the whole community, two sets of people must be provided for who cannot ordinarily become regular attendants—the babies and the shut-ins. In the former class are all infants and all children too young to become attending members of the school. Distances, bad roads, muddy walking and other special rural drawbacks tend to make mothers in the country keep the little ones of three and four at home where in the city they would go to Sunday school without a question. Doubtless this tendency can be largely overcome when a capable and enterprising beginners' teacher takes hold and convinces the mothers that they can and should overcome obstacles and provide for every beginner's presence in class every Sunday. But as this condition is far from prevalent as yet, it remains true that good cradle-roll work is more needful in the country than in the city, because more of the country children are kept at home.

The life of the shut-ins, also, is more isolated and monotonous in the country than where passers-by are numerous and there is always something going on.

Mothers with young children, the aged and infirm, chronic invalids, and occasionally persons employed on tasks which interfere with Sunday-school attendance, are to be found in the average country field, and the little Sunday school owes them its ministry of cheer, fellowship and Bible study. Hence the home department as well as the cradle roll should be counted not merely feasible projects but necessary parts of the little Sunday school, even if some already busy worker has to add one or both of these responsibilities to her busy life. Before starting the canvass suggested under the former heading, plan for a home department and a cradle roll, if these are not already at work, and let the enrolling of members in both these adjunct departments form part of the work.

Properly handled and pushed, each of these lines of work may be made a notable feeder to the school's attending membership. Many an otherwise godless and indifferent or religiously hostile home has been won for Christ through the school's interest in the baby. Many such families every year are drawn into happy relation to school and church before the little one is ready to come to school as a beginner. Many a home department member who reluctantly accepted the quarterly and grudgingly promised the half-hour-a-week minimum of lesson study and the quarterly record and offering has ripened into an earnest student of the Word ; and thousands of these every quarter find that, now they care for the lessons, the hindrances to their regular attendance on the adult class are not so insuperable after all. Good teachers and officers, also, are not infrequently graduated from the home department ranks.

The true ideal for both these departments is something beyond the familiar cradle roll and home department routine. They properly form part of the church's Department of the Home. Whatever tends to make home happier, more efficient, more godly and a better support for the educational work of the Sunday school and the church, is fit matter for the real Home Department to embody in its program. When the little school is ready to enter upon this vast and inviting sphere of religious influence and activity, there are books and tools in plenty to aid it in wise and effective endeavor to win the homes for Jesus and make each one an extension station in the work of church and school.

IV

RUNNING BY THE WEEK

The Superintendent a Teacher.—In the little Sunday school, the superintendent is compelled to do much of the teaching himself by the fact that all his classes ordinarily meet in one room. The elementary department programs of our graded Sunday-school experts provide for a large amount of desk teaching, over and above what is taught by the class teachers in connection with the graded lesson. Some of this is memory drill on supplemental lesson matter; some of it is instruction in missions, temperance and other topics; some is character-culture through birthday and fellowship exercises, giving, singing, thanksgiving and prayer. With beautiful art all this is arranged to fit the children's needs, so that in each of the three elementary departments, beginners, primary and junior, the pupil as the years pass shall grow and develop in Christian character, living as well as learning each week in accordance with his unfolding needs and powers.

With one room for all the classes, much of this departmental program work (fortunately not all) is impracticable. The child's spiritual needs, however, are not less because we have one room instead of four to teach him in. The responsibility for giving to every child in the little school as much as possible of what the three elementary departments would give

him is laid upon the superintendent of the little Sunday school. Part of this trust he may pass over to the teachers of these children; but that which must come to them through music, prayer and other concerted exercises rests with him.

The superintendent, therefore, should seize any opportunity that may come to him, at a convention or institute, to learn what the primary and junior leaders have to teach as to methods of departmental program work. The kindergarten ways of the beginners may not be usable by him; but many of the doings in a good primary room are full of suggestion for his own desk use; and, in the good junior department, much of what he sees may be bodily taken over. There are of course many department superintendents of experience and local repute who have not yet learned the modern ways, and the superintendent who visits their rooms will do so as a student rather than a copyist. But even so, much can be learned by the visitor who can think as well as see and hear.

The Weekly Routine.—If even ordinary good work is to be done by the average superintendent of the little school, to say nothing of such artistic leadership as we have just been considering, he will have to bring his preparatory labors down to a narrow routine, that can be fitted into the crowded hours of his busy life. We are laying out a Sunday-school job for a man who thought he had a strong man's load to carry already. What cannot be done in one or two evenings each week, or turned over to other hands, will have to wait undone. We might as well face the facts.

Monday and Friday evenings, let us arbitrarily suppose, are set apart by the superintendent for his Sunday-school work, in addition to the actual time of the session and the time just before starting for school or church. The first evening may be given to inspection of records, general preparation and correspondence or telephoning to secure coöperation; the second to personal preparation for his own platform work.

On Monday evening, then, the superintendent will go over the class records, noting who are falling off in attendance and so need a message or visit, what classes are increasing in size and interest and how the general totals compare with past records. Special needs like the illness or resignation of a teacher, the approach of a festival season or the call for some additional supplies, may now be considered and provided for or prepared for submission to the next workers' conference. With these matters cleared away, a few birthday letters may be written, or a message of encouragement sent to a worker who is having a hard time.

Friday night will then be free for planning next Sunday's program and thinking ahead for the Sundays to come. The plans for the current quarter and the calendar for the year[1] will determine to a certain extent what is to be done each Sunday. Completing these plans, the superintendent will prepare himself to carry them out. How the order of worship is to be conducted, what hymns are to be sung, who besides himself are to take part and how, what Bible selection he will read, how he will pray and what

[1] See Chapters V and VI.

shall be the substance of his brief talk from the desk, must all be thought out and made ready. A good teacher would work as hard in preparing to meet a single class; but the superintendent is responsible for a full half of next Sunday's opportunity for the whole school.

Notes on a Rural Program.—In order that the superintendent of the average little Sunday school may have a chance to see himself at work, the following is submitted for his inspection. Is this a fair statement of the way a session of the little country Sunday school is frequently run?

Open school at the usual hour, provided the organist is not late.

Pass around Bibles, hymn-books and lesson leaves.

Sing one or two hymns.

Read the lesson for the day, responsively.

Lead the school in prayer.

Sing another hymn.

Secretary reads the minutes of last Sunday's session and calls the roll of officers and teachers.

Sing the lesson hymn.

Lesson study for twenty or twenty-five minutes. The superintendent teaches a class.

Secretary takes up the offering and marks the attendance, soon after the teachers begin.

Librarian gives out books and papers, a little before the teachers close.

School called to order without notice. Singing.

Call for the golden text and catechism question for the day, sometimes ask "desk questions" on the lesson. School responds by reading from the lesson leaves.

Secretary reports attendance for the day, number of visitors and collection by classes.

Notices and remarks; sometimes a talk on the lesson. Singing.
The Lord's Prayer in concert, standing.
Dismissal.

As a matter of fact, thousands of little Sunday schools are being run to-day in not nearly so businesslike and orderly a fashion as this program indicates. There are elements of moral strength in it which all makers of Sunday-school programs ought to study and emulate. Nevertheless it is not all it ought to be. Let us see wherein it could be improved on.

That waiting on the organist needs cutting out, to begin with. How? If the superintendent can raise the tune, or has any one among his punctual helpers who can, let him announce that next Sunday the school will start on the minute; and when the tardy organist arrives, let her discover that the world can move without her after all. That is one way. Another is to appoint an ambitious young musician as assistant organist, whose duties shall include opening the school if her principal is not on the bench at the minute set for starting.

The distribution of supplies is a task educationally valuable as an activity for a class of boys. Do not waste it by doing the work yourself or letting the secretary do it. Oversee it; but put the work up to a small committee of juniors, who must be there each week in time to attend to their task.

Never sing hymns in bulk. Never use the language of worship as a mere means of filling in time. The pastor who said during prayer-meeting one cold night, "In order that the sexton may have a chance to poke

the fire, we will sing, 'Nearer, my God, to Thee,'" was franker than the average superintendent, but not so very different. Sing nothing that is not actually needed in your program plan. Most schools sing too many hymns and have far too little of real worship in song.

Why read the uniform lesson for the day? Because the passage is printed on the lesson leaves? The leaves are useful in their place, but they do not take the place of the Bible. Because we desire to help the class work? Experience shows that the practice does not help; it hinders. When did any pupil ever know an answer to a lesson question because he had just joined in reading the lesson verses? Liturgic use and lesson use of the Bible are two entirely different things. If the passage makes a good class lesson, it will probably make a poor desk lesson. Passages that make fine desk lessons for responsive reading are not interesting for use by teachers in class. Even if we are not yet ready, then, to abandon the uniform lesson for class use, let us cease to use it as our reading lesson. We can do better for our school, every way.

As to the prayer, how much more helpful a prayer is to the worshipers when it is brief and concerned with a specific object! Divide the praying. Near the opening have an "invocation," briefly asking God's blessing on the day's work, and closing with the Lord's Prayer. Before the lesson have a general prayer, still brief, but covering the school's needs and feelings for that day. At the close have a brief closing prayer; or, if the pastor is present, ask him to dismiss the school with the benediction. Try to

have one or more in the force besides yourself who can pray in public. Let one of these sometimes make the general prayer. Always notify such in advance.

The idea of reading the minutes has been brought over from lodges and societies. In these bodies the reading of minutes is essential, for they are organizations whose present action is based on the action taken at the last meeting. The Sunday school is not such a society, except when it goes into business session; and even then its action is likely to be based on present need rather than past decisions. Cut out the minutes. Who cares what last Sunday's weather was, or who prayed? Record these facts, but spare the school the reading of them. They are material for the secretary's quarterly and annual reports, when they will work up into interesting statistics. A brief report, near the close of school, giving the facts of attendance and offering for the day, is all that is needed on this score.

Much the same may be said as to the roll call. It may have some value in shaming a careless worker into more regular attendance; but more probably it is not worth the time and attention it costs. The school has only so much sit-still capacity, and every draft upon it leaves that much less for lessons and worship. Record these attendances silently.

The time allowed for class study in most little Sunday schools is shamefully short. The senior and adult classes should whenever possible have forty-five minutes or an hour. If these can betake themselves to any other place for class study, let them stay to the end and dismiss separately, of course

with a closing prayer. Thirty-five minutes will suit the intermediates and juniors very well, if the latter at least are working on the graded lessons and have desks or tables on which to do hand-work for part of the time. The primary class and even more the beginners cannot sit still so long: let them therefore change seats quietly and turn from one kind of lesson work to another. Class curtains or screens will make this quite possible. Cut out ten minutes from the old-fashioned program, allowing thirty-five minutes for the teaching time.

It may sometimes be necessary for the superintendent to carry a class temporarily; but even in a very small school he should be free to oversee the classes, welcome visitors, prepare for the next duties and substitute in emergencies. No superintendent can be a regular teacher and also take proper care of his school.

Whether the teachers' time be long or short, every minute of it should be theirs without interruption. Three minutes, regularly appointed at a certain time in the opening service, should be set apart for the marking of records and the taking of the offering in classes; and the collections should be made by the secretary and the treasurer in a dignified way, without delay and without confusion. To break in on a teacher while he is opening up his lesson is a crime against good education. To distribute books and papers just as the closing points are being made is even worse. Do all that just before the classes are dismissed from their seats, or else at the door.

Teachers are entitled to two or three minutes' notice before the school is called to order for the

closing service. This should be so given as not to interrupt class work. The simplest form of notice is one tap on the bell. Where the school has a soft-toned organ or a piano, and an accompanist who is musician enough to know how to play softly and religiously, let music carry the message that in two or three minutes lesson work will be over. A violinist could do this, if he played softly enough, but not a cornetist: his tones would make further teaching impossible.

About one superintendent in fifty can profitably say the last word on the lesson, after his teachers have done their best; and he will probably be wise enough not to say it. The other forty-nine should do their desk talking before the lesson period, leaving nothing to the close but the secretary's report and a reverent dismissal. Any catechism or other supplemental lesson needed by the school should come in ahead of the teacher's lesson, so that that may be free to make its closing impression on heart and life. Notices should be given when the records and offerings are taken. Everything that the whole school should hear belongs in the opening service. After that the class work has the right of way.

Many forms of reverent dismissal may be used besides the Lord's Prayer. The Doxology is always in order as a closing verse. The Aaronic benediction (Numbers vi. 24–26), or any of the benedictions at the close of Paul's Epistles, may be made into simple prayers by changing the pronoun "thee" or "you" to "us"; and as such they may be used with perfect propriety by a layman, or recited in concert like the rather overworked Mizpah benediction.

Benedictions, moreover, do not necessarily call for a standing attitude. If the school is taught to sing the last hymn sitting, a quiet, devotional hymn being chosen, and if after the hymn they are taught to bend or kneel in reverence, saying together the benediction prayer and then a silent prayer for God's blessing and help, the organist breaking the silence with the soft strains of a hymn-tune, a far more impressive and worshipful close can be had than with a tingling march-song, a few formal words and a breaking of ranks while still standing. The distributions, also, can be swiftly made while the school is still seated, the classes leaving as each is supplied.

In the light of these suggestions, let the reader now rewrite that program, correcting it into what he thinks its proper shape should be.

Class Instruction.—To see that each class has a prepared teacher, that every needed facility for good class work is ready, and that the work of each class is protected from curtailment or interruption, will require planning and effort on the superintendent's part. It is however his most important duty. If this is successfully done, everything else becomes relatively easy. Attendance takes care of itself if there is always a smiling teacher, a comfortable place, a good lesson and an undisturbed period. To insure this, one or two good substitutes must be within reach, and each teacher must learn that absence without notice or presence without a prepared lesson are not tolerated under this administration.

If the teacher, however, is to acquire the habit of making full preparation, and the class is to learn

the joy of steady and progressive lesson work, there must be an end of all irregularity in the lesson time. With rigid regularity, at a certain hour and minute each Sunday, the lesson period must begin; and with equal regularity must each class be left alone until the appointed minutes for warning and close. If a chance visitation of the school, or the superintendent's bright idea for the closing service, or the excuse that this is Temperance Sunday or Review Sunday or what not, is to mean that to-day the teacher who planned a lesson for thirty-five minutes is to get but twenty, what encouragement has that teacher to plan again? Something might be as important as the lessons our teachers are to teach this Sunday; but nothing can be as important as good lessons from our teachers every Sunday: and the price of such lessons is the superintendent's fixed will to maintain lesson routine.

Unless each teacher is frequently consulted with and if necessary helped in the conduct of his lesson work, steady educational progress in each class will be a matter of chance and good fortune rather than plan. If the work of the teachers is to be successful as a whole, it must have unity; and that means that it must be led. The musicians of the band may be better players than the leader, but they need him notwithstanding. Let the superintendent or his director of instruction ask each teacher, perhaps once a month, to tell what he has been teaching of late, how the class is responding, what they seem to have learned and decided on and what is his program of teaching for the month to come. If he is wrestling with a hard problem of lessons or discipline, help him, and call

in whatever other help may be within reach. At the monthly workers' conference let each in turn make such a report, leading to a discussion of the difficulties involved. Get the substitute teachers out to these conferences, that they may join in this common study of class problems.

Desk Instruction.—The superintendent, as already remarked, is a teacher. His lessons, however, are not arranged for him in a course and printed in a quarterly. He must therefore plan his lessons as well as teach them. There is so much to teach, and so little time in which to teach it, that it is surely unwise for him to spend that little in a reteaching of lessons that his teachers have taught already. Why should not the superintendent have a lesson of his own?

Much of the superintendent's best teaching will be unconscious and incidental. His punctual arrival, his reverent demeanor, his firm insistence on order and punctuality in others, his courtesy and patience, his regard for rights and feelings, his approval of the things that are excellent, will all teach. But besides these unconscious lessons there must be others, if the class teaching is to be rounded into a system and the school's weekly life made rich and full.

The school must be taught how its work should be done. First determine what point needs reforming and who are the leaders whom it is most important to set right. Do all that can be done through private interviews and arrangements with these. Then plan to reach the point indirectly by some desk reference that will not sound like a complaint or an exhortation. "As there seems to be some misunderstanding of the hour when our services begin," said a pastor

once, quite casually, as he gave out the notices, "I will remark that our morning worship begins at half-past ten o'clock." The rebuke did its work and left no sting. "In order to accommodate those whose time is unusually valuable," the superintendent, as winter comes on, might likewise say, "we will close half a minute earlier; and that will make it unnecessary for any one to reach for his overshoes or wriggle into his overcoat while we are singing our closing words of praise to God or asking His blessing on our service."

Other lessons are needed on the materials of worship. We approach God with the use of song, prayer and fitly chosen verses from His Word. If these are to become to us the means of devotion, we must know them so well that we can use them unconsciously, as we use the Lord's Prayer or our old prayer-meeting hymns. Desk lessons, therefore, are needed on these things. Take for instance the Long Meter Doxology. Study it word by word. What is a blessing? Name a few of the things you count blessings. How do they come into our lives—by driblets, or as a river? They "flow." From whom? "All creatures"—who and what are included? Shall the heathen praise God, too? Why? If we sing that second line, what is our duty as to these heathen? Is this world "here below" the only world? When did that "heavenly host" sing in men's ears? Who make up the Trinity? Read the familiar lines again slowly and put these thoughts into them. Spend five minutes or less with the school on this lesson; then rise and sing the lines as a song of gratitude to God.

The Twenty-third Psalm, divided into three or four

lessons, may be similarly taught. So with the Apostles' Creed, the First Psalm, the Two Great Commandments, and above all the Lord's Prayer. If material for desk lesson teaching is needed, here it is. But the superintendent must study not only what to say but how to teach it by question, remark and suggested illustration. He is not to preach or exhort on these topics, but rather to stimulate thought; and his week's lesson must snap shut in five or at most seven minutes. Never relax this rule.

On another Sunday the lesson may be a new hymn. Be forehanded: choose the hymn and tune several weeks ahead, and ask the organist to play the tune as opening music, so that the school will learn it unconsciously. Study the words like any other lesson, so that you can call attention to that strong thought in verse three, or ask a question as to what is meant in such-and-such a line. Waken attention; arouse interest; let all read the hymn together. Then let the organist play the now familiar tune, and the new hymn will sing itself. The leader will of course keep the school up to time, correcting drag and uncertainty, and will try to improve the attack by insisting that all start off on the very first note.

Drills on the books of the Bible, the Ten Commandments and the catechism or other brief statement of the Church's faith, and blackboard map lessons on Palestine, the Sinai Peninsula and the Old and New Testament worlds, also have their value, if the superintendent can teach briskly and write and draw freely as he speaks. Most of this material, however, properly belongs in a course of correlated graded studies, to be taught in the classes at the proper ages. Such

desk teaching may be introduced now and then with good effect for a few weeks, until some one bit of knowledge has been well learned.

Missionary teaching is even more desirable. The superintendent should prepare himself by subscribing to one or two missionary magazines, buying one or more from among the multitude of interesting missionary books issued every year, and jotting in a note-book some items that will interest the school. Then let him devote his desk talk once a month to some particular missionary hero or some country of which he has read. If he cares, the school will care. Perhaps some teacher can help in this with a short paper on a missionary topic. A large part of this desk teaching, in fact, may profitably be given by teachers and older pupils; the assignments being made at the monthly meetings of the workers' conference.

Official Routine.—Neither for class nor for desk instruction will there be the proper chance unless the superintendent, as manager, sees thoroughly to his Sunday school's routine. In a great hotel, on board ship, on the train, everywhere we go, we see that smoothness of living and liberty to do one's work at ease comes through rigid insistence on the small details of the great task. So the superintendent must work out with his secretary just how and when the class supplies are to be distributed and collected, how class attention can be saved, when and how new supplies are to be ordered and how reports are to be made up and published. With the accompanist he must arrange what preludes and announcing music are to be played, what new hymns are to be learned, and which hymns are to be started with a single

chord instead of being played through. The tiniest detail is important if it helps some one to do better work or increases the chance for a good impression. This principle is valid for the little school no less than for that of five hundred.

If each helper were well educated and resourceful, competent himself to lead the school, it would still help him to have a fixed routine to go by. The superintendent himself needs that. But for the young or the slow and ill-trained helper, routine is indispensable. Show such a one exactly what is expected of him each week; commend him frequently for his regularity and the helpfulness of his work; so arrange that the school as well as the leader will notice his faithfulness; and then, having provided for these functions, set about the training of some other official machine. Watch for weaknesses, friction, overlap and all other kinds of inefficiency. Ask, By what increase of official service could that defect be provided for? The more efficient the Sunday-school machine becomes, the easier it will be to secure the services of a new officer.

The Worshiping Sunday School.—The highest work of all in the Sunday school is its worship. In worship we draw near to God. We believe that He is, and so come before Him. We commune with Him in praise, Bible reading and prayer, telling Him our thoughts and letting Him speak to us in the Word and through His Spirit's voice in our souls. We fear and reverence Him, believing that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, and that, as a jealous God, He will not accept unworthy and divided service. We offer ourselves to Him, sealing

our sincerity with a gift, an act of communion or a vow. If ours is a Christian Sunday school, how can its session be complete without worship? If worship is what has just been stated, how can we designate as worship such "opening exercises" as those with which our sessions too often begin?

We need first of all to realize that worship, like its divine Object, is jealous. Worship will not mix with bustle, or with instruction, much less with irreverence and disorder. A time must be set apart in our session when we do nothing else but worship God. In this worship all in the room, old and young, will heartily join. It may be but for five minutes; but throughout that five minutes we must lead the school in what some one has called "the practice of the presence of God." The natural time for this will be at the opening of the session; but a little school which found it impossible to overcome a straggling entrance of members might transfer the period to the close. The superintendent's leadership must extend to his own conduct and state of mind: as priest of the worshiping company he must humble his own heart before the shrine.

What order of worship shall be followed is not essential if the spirit of worship is present. It is best to begin with a call to worship, repeated each Sunday until a new service is adopted. "The Lord is in His holy temple" is a familiar example of such a call. Then let the organist strike a chord, at which the school will rise and sing one or two verses of a strong but familiar hymn, or the Doxology. Still standing, let them repeat some devotional Scripture sentences, or the Creed. Follow this with a prayer and the

Lord's Prayer; then sing a hymn expressive of real devotion, consecration and faith. Resuming seats, with late-comers now admitted, repeat together "I was glad when they said unto me" (Ps. cxxii. 1), or some similar verse, and a verse or two about giving. The class records may now quietly be marked and the offerings taken. At a signal each class secretary will rise and come forward with the offering envelope, depositing the same at the desk and bowing in a word of concert prayer. Another song-verse, or the "Gloria" sung standing, may conclude the worship period; the desk lesson following. This is one way; there are many others.

A Sunday school whose opening moments are moments of reverent and humble approach to God will carry the same spirit into its lesson time and on into its week of living the lessons learned. A school which every week seeks and finds the way to God will find it no hard task to lead the little ones to Jesus and to win even the careless and ungodly to the Redeemer's fold.

V

RUNNING BY THE QUARTER

The Sunday-School Calendar.—Every Sunday school instinctively follows a calendar. Certain observances, year after year, take place at times more or less definitely fixed; and these observances serve to divide the year into terms which in some cases are almost as definite as those of the public school. The idea of attaching an educational value to these terms, however, of making each stand for a purposeful effort to win certain results, has not heretofore been conspicuous in our planning. Under the uniform lesson system such an effort was scheduled for Review Sunday at the close of each quarter. But the call then made for the results of the quarter's teaching seldom took hold of the life of the school and was frequently omitted altogether. In this chapter we shall try to see how real educational results, quarter by quarter, may be sought for and obtained.

The calendar of the little Sunday school in the country and of its big city cousin are not in all respects the same. The four main festivals of the average American Sunday school—Easter, Children's Day, Rally Day and Christmas—are observed with equal zeal in city and country. Each ought to run on a twelve-months' year, and usually does so when firmly led. Each has, roughly speaking, nine good months and three poor months in its year. The

third calendar quarter, July to September, is the weak time for the city school. The first quarter, January to March, is the corresponding hard time for the little school in the rural districts.

The superintendent who would be an educational leader must have a yearly plan which, while taking full account of the people's customs and feelings, is based not on them but rather on what his Sunday school is to do as a school. If the three summer months are the best time of his year, he will plan to do his hardest work at that season. If attendance during the winter period is reduced and uncertain, he may reorganize the force and lighten the work of that term, while counting it as much a duty as ever to do all that can be done.

The four festivals mentioned, with the use of the lesson quarterlies, have accustomed us to a quarterly division of the Sunday-school year. We might speak of our year as divided into four terms, the Easter term, January to March, the Children's Day term, April to June, the Rally Day term, July to September, and the Christmas term, October to December. The work of each of these terms may be made to head up in the festival which comes at or near its close. If only we could so connect the work with the festival as to make the classes feel that all the work was part of the festival preparations, what a motive we should have with which to keep our classes up to their lesson tasks!

Three problems, evidently, will have to be solved before we can win for our project this desirable advantage. We must clearly see and definitely measure our quarter's educational task. We must learn how

to plan and conduct a successful educational festival. We must learn to relate the task to the festival so that each shall belong to the other ; one the preparation, the other the conclusion. Let us study these three problems in detail.

Planning the Desk Work.—Taking up the first of these three problems, and beginning with the work of the superintendent, we see that he must first of all arrange a series of desk lessons, each from four to seven minutes in length, to be presented by himself and others after the opening worship and before the classes turn to their separate lesson study. General material for these desk lessons was suggested in Chapter IV. Let the superintendent try his hand at teaching one or more of these, until the method is clear. A short, plain, earnest talk on the topic is good ; a talk involving question and answer is better ; two or three brief essays or recitations, introduced and followed by words explaining and enforcing the ideas thus presented, might be best of all.

The general and undated lesson material is for use on Sundays not claimed for some seasonal topic. Which these Sundays are can soon be determined. Take a calendar for the year and four sheets of paper. Write, in a column to the left, the dates of the Sundays for the quarter. For which of these is there a clear motive or topic that ought to have the right of way on that Sunday? As fast as such a date is settled, put it down.

The first Sunday in January, for instance, is New Year Sunday, when an encouraging talk on good habits, especially good church habits, will be due. Somewhere in the quarter, in a church Sunday

school, will come one or more communion seasons, or a time of special revival interest: save the desk lesson time, then or just previously, for an evangelistic appeal. The second quarter is particularly full of set times—Easter (usually in April); Mother's Day, second Sunday in May; Peace Sunday, third Sunday in May; Memorial Day, a Sunday near the month's close; Children's Day, second Sunday in June. Patriotic Sunday is of course the Sunday nearest the Fourth of July; Labor Sunday the first in September, Rally or Promotion Sunday the last. In the fourth quarter we have World's Temperance Sunday, Thanksgiving Sunday, Bible Sunday (first in December), Christmas Sunday and Old Year Sunday. To these general days an indefinite number may be added from local customs, the missionary and benevolent plans and directions of the denomination, and the school's relation to its community. Some cities have a Hospital Sunday, for example: there may be some similar custom in the little school's neighborhood. A calendar committee from the workers' conference might be a help to the superintendent in the drawing up of such a list of assigned Sundays.

These settled, the remaining Sundays can be given to the general desk teaching outlined in Chapter IV. On one Sunday let the superintendent plan to teach a new hymn. On another a temperance lesson may be due, or a missionary presentation, or a drill on Bible books or the map of Palestine. Put a few more missionary books in the library, and ask one or two of the best speakers to search them for material, presenting what they find to the school. For every

Sunday to be observed in remembrance of a cause, literature in abundance is generally offered. Secure this for use as needed; but beware of concert exercises that call for a reduction of lesson time.

The calendar completed for the year, or at least for the coming quarter, the superintendent should announce it, post a copy near the door and proceed to the work of carrying it out. It is essential that the school shall anticipate the use that is to be made of the day. Material needed on any topic should be written for in ample season. Persons expected to take part should have early notice, with such help as may be needed. Viewing all as his quarterly lesson course, let the superintendent reckon up what he has planned to teach; and let him keep, week by week, a brief but faithful record of how far he has succeeded in presenting the material and in making it interesting and significant to the school.

Replanning the Class Work.—In the same definite way will the work of each class need to be planned for the term. We must bid farewell to the notion that all necessary planning has been done for us by the makers of our lesson helps. The graded lessons have finished that idea. Under the uniform system our plan was simply the particular way in which we went at each lesson. If we failed to master it, or to get a heart-warming discussion out of it, we had missed our opportunity for that Sunday; but another opportunity was coming next Sunday, with a fresh lesson to work on. Each graded lesson, however, is a lesson in the school sense of the word. It must be learned, seen, experienced, expressed, applied, before we are ready to proceed to

the next lesson. When these lessons are first introduced into a school, it is unfortunately necessary that classes shall study courses without having first had the courses which go before. How that would work in mathematics or English any school-teacher can see. We must give each class the course belonging to that grade; but for several years we shall have to simplify the assignments of home work, making the work easier and less thorough than the book calls for, because these pupils have not had the lessons of the grades below. This means a replanning of the quarter's work.

Unless trained in school work, the teacher himself can seldom do this replanning to advantage. A director of instruction—some school-teacher, normal-trained, working with and under the superintendent—would be a great help here. Study carefully the first two or three lessons to get the method proposed by the lesson writer for pupils and for teacher. Study the "Foreword" for aims and suggestions of method. Consider the qualifications of the teacher and the capacities of the class. Then fix a few definite specifications of what will constitute a satisfactory lesson, including always some hand-work or note-book work by which results can be expressed and measured. Impress on the teacher the need of finishing each lesson on this given scale, even if only six lessons are covered in twelve Sundays' study. More may be done, especially in discussion and personal application, but not less.

What of the classes still pursuing the uniform lesson? The same principle can be applied to them. Let the teacher open a pocket record, entering in it

each Sunday on his return home a statement of the attendance, the lesson points presented, the interest shown, the response in answers and questions asked, and the definite results which he thinks were secured. In an older class a recording secretary might be found, able and willing to keep such a record and to read it as minutes at the opening of next Sunday's class session. The idea that every Sunday's opportunity is an asset to be accounted for is worth cultivating.

Appraising the Term's Work.—Besides the usual quarterly review and summing up of the matters studied, to be attended to in the lesson-study period, there should be on the closing Sunday of each quarter a summing up of the results as a whole. What have we done with our quarter's opportunity? Each teacher and class must be led to face the actual record of work done, and must be shown how to appraise it in terms of educational value. If class and teacher do this appraising together, and if the superintendent's work comes in for its appraisal too, there need be no embarrassment about the operation.

Before the advent of graded lessons, quarterly written reviews were frequently held by enterprising superintendents. Now that we have graded lesson books which provide for some form of written work on each lesson, our examination will consist in the turning in of creditable books at the quarter's end. We may supplement this by asking the teachers of the graded classes to designate the honor pupil of each class for the quarter, dividing the honors where two or at most three are equally worthy. And, as the class surveys its quarter's work, we may

ask teacher and class to agree on how the work they have done together, both as to quantity and quality, compares with a perfect scale of one hundred for that class. Adding a simple statement of the teacher's record as to attendance or presence by qualified substitute, we have a working basis for a fairly definite appraisal of the educational effort expended on each quarter's work. This should be recorded and reported.

The conclusion of any such exercise as this will naturally lead a Sunday school to prayer. How poor and unworthy our efforts have been, in comparison with our own powers, the preciousness of the truths we have had set before us, the fleeting character of our opportunities and our need of the lessons we have come so far short of learning! Save a few minutes at the close of the hour for a service of prayer and reconsecration to the Sunday school's great and exacting task.

Records and Recognitions.—Such a strictly educational record as has just been described is quite apart from the necessary records of membership, attendance and offering ordinarily kept by the secretary. These also must be looked after by the superintendent; for on them, properly planned, diligently kept and wisely utilized, rests much of the efficiency of the school. The work of the secretary in a large Sunday school has been well discussed; and endless are the varieties of record books that have been published to aid in handling twenty, thirty and fifty classes. The special problem presented by the secretarial needs of the school of five or at most ten classes has not been studied with equal attention.

Besides the private record which each teacher ought

to keep, and the superintendent's pocket record, kept in his own way, three records need to be kept by the secretary. These are the class record, the school weekly record and the register. The class record should be kept in a class book, or on a class card ruled and dated by Sundays. The punch-card systems now so common are adapted to the conditions of a crowded city school where hundreds of records must be made, gathered and checked up in a few minutes. With but five classes to oversee, there is no reason why each should not have its simple class book, with a class roll that stays in the same order from Sunday to Sunday, and that tells the full story of each Sunday's work in permanent and easily consulted form. Each class should have its book and offering envelope before the session opens, and these should be collected before lesson-study time.

For the junior class a "junior record of credits" is published, with loose leaves, one for each pupil and one for the class as a whole. It provides for crediting the pupil each week for attendance (20 points), punctuality (10), Bible brought (10), offering (10), daily Bible reading (35, or 5 for each day), and church attendance (15); total, 100 points. These are the items of character-training on which special stress needs to be laid while the child is passing through this period; hence this book, or some similar record, is recommended for the junior class.

The school weekly record is usually kept on one page of a book, arranged to form a record of proceedings for that day. Quarterly totals can be taken from such a book only by copying the figures on another sheet. Why not run the items as column-heads

along the top of the record book's page, and the Sundays for the quarter down the first column? Then, with two facing pages for one quarter's reports, the record of one Sunday can be put on a single line, and the columns can be footed and averaged at the bottom. In the same way the four quarterly reports can be arranged in four columns on another page, with annual report and all other needed records for the year on a dozen pages more. Any bright secretary can rule such a book for himself, making it fit exactly the life of his school.[1]

The register should be a large, well-bound minute book, with alphabetic index of names and registry numbers, and then one page, or half a page, allotted to each member of the school. Beginning with superintendent and teachers, give each present member a half-page and a consecutive number. Write each name in full, exactly as written by its owner or his parent. In abbreviated form add residence, birthday, date of joining the school, date of uniting with church, name of parent or guardian, member of which class and public school grade. Three or four lines should suffice for this, leaving ample space for subsequent items: promoted to.....class (with date), appointed teacher of.....class, left for..... College, removed to....., etc. The entries for adults, of course, will omit year of birth and name of parent or guardian. The present members should be registered without undue delay; and thereafter no newcomer should be counted a member of the school

[1] The author's "Westminster Ideal Secretary's Record for Small Schools," published by the Westminster Press, Philadelphia, is constructed on this plan. Price, 25 cents.

till he has been present for several Sundays, has declared his intention to be a permanent, obedient and willing member, has been properly graded and placed by the superintendent and has reported to the secretary to be duly entered in the school register.

Every little Sunday school has need of such a record as this. It will be well to entrust it to the most faithful and painstaking member of the school, appointing such person as biographer, historian or birthday secretary. Impress it on every member that when he leaves the school he must keep the biographer advised of his address and his welfare, especially of such happenings and achievements as may reflect credit on the Sunday school that trained him for the work. A birthday letter, with an offering enclosed for old times' sake, would be a convenient way of securing this permanent touch. Colleges coin the records and the loyalty of their alumni into a substantial asset: why should not the little Sunday school do the same?[1]

The class books, giving the detailed weekly record of each teacher and pupil, are part of the school's record system and should be carefully kept and filed as historical material at the end of the year. Who knows what famous man may revisit the old neighborhood some day and ask to see the record of his childish faithfulness at Sunday school? At the fortieth reunion of what was once a little Sunday school in the outskirts of Philadelphia, the old record, showing the creditable attendance and work of John

[1] For a full account of such a register, as kept for forty years in a little New England Sunday school, see Trumbull's "A Model Superintendent," pages 15, 68–72.

Wanamaker as a junior pupil, formed an exhibit of which the aged superintendent and his surviving fellow-workers were justly proud.

Of small value, however, are any records if no use is made of the story they tell. The record is in order to the report. Every Sunday, before school closes, the secretary should make his brief weekly report, which may also be posted on the school's bulletin-board. Every quarter a quarterly report should be rendered, giving the more important statistics of the school's work for the term, including membership, number of new members, highest, lowest and average attendance, number of visitors and offerings for regular and special objects. The condensed record of each class may also properly be given. When to this is added by the superintendent the educational report previously suggested, with names of honor members for the term, the school and its visiting friends may gain a new conception of its importance and of their obligations.

An Educational Festival.—Any festival may be called educational if it helps us in making a success of our educational plans. If we prove ourselves able to carry through a first-rate Christmas entertainment or picnic, we may thereby gain such prestige as leader that the school will permit us to introduce graded lessons. But a real educational festival is one in which, without sacrifice of interest and life, features that teach wrong lessons are supplanted by others representing studies in which the school has been engaged and which it has prepared in form worthy of presentation to an audience.

At present, in many little Sunday schools, some

of the festivals, especially Christmas, draw so heavily on the time and interest of the school and its best workers that lesson work and religious interest are alike forgotten for several weeks before the festal day. This waste must be stopped; and in its place a system must be established that will earn an educational profit on every festival held by the school.

Festivals held on Sunday at the usual hour of the session are generally of a staid and devotional type, though sometimes admitting children's recitations. When held on Sunday evening a somewhat larger liberty is taken. On a week-night, especially in the case of the Christmas celebration, many schools consider costuming and dramatism quite permissible. Santa Claus, alone or attended by various fanciful characters, arrives to distribute the candy or other gifts; and sometimes the young folks get up a "cantata," which in Sunday-school language means any light dramatic performance, largely musical, offered for Sunday-school use. In some neighborhoods so much effort has been spent and so many really able presentations are remembered that the people are hard to please. How can such a festival be made over without robbing the occasion of its excitement and its charm?

Well, for one change, the Sunday school can withdraw from the business of providing amateur performances to the community. If these are desired, bring together the leading committee workers of the last few affairs and help them to organize a dramatic association, auxiliary to Sunday school and church if that is acceptable, independent if it is not. The dramatic instinct is normal and healthy, and offers a

fine basis for good social fellowship. Encourage the young people to serve the community in this way. Let the association include in its season's plan a simple but good performance for the Christmas festival and a missionary pageant to be given out-of-doors in June. The senior or young people's class may be willing to undertake this without forming a new organization.

As to the gifts to the school, thousands of Sunday schools have now learned by experience the truth of what Jesus said so long ago about giving and receiving. Let the Christmas festival always be a time for bringing gifts for others needier than we. The poor little waifs in the city slums, the toilers in sweat-shops, the sufferers from the ravages of war,—appeals for such as these will waken interest among country children and bring out gifts that will decorate the platform more impressively than holly and greens. The Christmas example of the Wise Men may be used in this connection. Are we not celebrating the birthday of our King?

The popularity of the children's recitations comes largely from the fond pride of the parents in seeing their darlings on the platform. What these recite is a secondary consideration. Why then should they not recite some of their Sunday-school lesson work? Why, also, should the recitations not be grouped so that each will play its part in a joint endeavor, forming a concert exercise, with a message and a value that the children themselves can understand? It is not good for the moral health of a little child to send him on the platform alone, and then to cheer and congratulate him admiringly for what he has done.

The sweet unconsciousness of childhood is as easily fingered off and as impossible to restore as the bloom on a butterfly's wing. Lift the children's minds while they are being drilled to the thought that they are to do this service for Jesus and to help the school in its work ; keep their thoughts off themselves and the glory they will win. So may their part be to them a means of grace, a service rendered to the Lord.

Simple children's pageants and dramatic performances can with no great difficulty be woven out of the material of their graded lessons and their missionary studies. Not every quarter can this be done, nor has every teacher the ingenuity and patience to lead a class in working out its plan. But the material is there. Let the intermediate class, for instance, begin in October to work up a few of the scenes in the life of David, beginning with simple tableaux, expanding a few of these into dialogue, and trying to make out of some one, say the visit of David and Abishai to Saul's camp (1 Sam. xxvi.), an animated moving picture. Would not that class by Easter, perhaps by Christmas, be ready to give a "show" that would be worth coming to see? Would they not have to study their Bibles as never before in order to learn the facts and arrange the scenes and the talk? Would not the moral force of the story impress itself on actors and spectators alike? That would be, so far, an educational festival.

To a musician's ear and a musical educator's nerves, the most unsatisfactory feature of the ordinary Sunday-school festival is its music. The school buys a special service, spends weeks in practice, gives the

performance before a supposedly admiring company, and then throws the service away. Does it pay to do this? Why not use every Sunday songs worthy of being sung at a festival? If the school will use a really good song-book, learning a new hymn every few Sundays, festival time will find it with plenty of music on hand, new and old, that its audience will be charmed to hear. A Sunday-school choir in a few outside rehearsals can prepare some additional music. Then the superintendent may draft his program as he thinks best, posting it on blackboard or wall. The music will thus be part of the school's educational exhibit; and the approach of the festival will be their incentive for singing well every Sunday.

The pupils' note-books, maps, folders and other trophies of diligence in graded study may properly be displayed as part of the festival decorations. Stretch one or two strings at a convenient height along the wall from window to window, and on these hang the books, with names well displayed, so that they may be examined by parents and other admirers. One or two such exhibitions will serve to make the home work seem to some of the careless ones more worth doing.

If now the quarterly report of superintendent and secretary can be closed a Sunday or two ahead, the remainder of the record going over to the next quarter, and if somewhere in the program this story of the school's creditable progress can be read, perhaps by one of the young women whose pleasant voice will give its facts a worthy hearing, the educational features of our festival program will be for the time complete.

VI

RUNNING BY THE YEAR

An Educational Perspective.—It is necessary that the superintendent shall learn to run his Sunday school by the year as well as by the week, and that beyond the present year he shall take account of the years to come and of those that have gone before. His Sunday school is a school. Its work is the developing of characters and the shaping of lives. These lives stretch for years, past and to come ; and to-day's work in Sunday school is a cross-section of the experiences through which pupils and teachers are severally passing. His watchword might well be, Not across, but along. His zeal should be, not to run a session brighter and more successful than any ever held before, but rather to perceive more clearly than ever before what these souls need that his Sunday school can give them, and to run such a session that every soul shall through it receive the exact help needed for that stage of his individual forward way.

If this vision of each pupil's whole need is to be wrought into action, we must divide our task into units and plan to finish each unit in its appointed time. We have already seen the general plan of grading by which the pupil's life is divided into periods of Sunday-school experience,—cradle roll, beginners, primary, junior, intermediate, senior and adult. Every child must make his way up through

these successive ages ; and it is for us, by grading the school, to make our institution correspond at every stage as well as we can to his needs at that stage. Our general age-unit is the year. Our present task, therefore, is to plan for such a year's work in our little Sunday school that the needs of every pupil shall be met as fully and as closely as our resources and our powers of leadership allow.

In planning this year's instruction we must keep in mind what instruction the pupil has had before. We must indeed consider what all his past experiences have been, at home, on the farm, in the woods, in his reading, and in the hidden life of his soul, with its unspoken questionings, its ideals and ambitions, its decisions and its defaults. All that we can learn of every pupil must be taken into account in settling how we shall try to help him during the coming year. Nor must we fail to project ourselves ahead into the years to come, with our plans for more advanced work, to begin when that which we are now starting shall have finished its course and made possible a new departure.

Reorganizing for the New Year.—All the work of the Sunday school should be made to end on Promotion Day. The treasurer's books should close for the year with the end of that calendar quarter. The new class books and secretary's record should start at that time. Honors for the year should be announced. All terms of service of officers and teachers should expire then ; the new appointees to be determined at the next previous meeting of the workers' conference, except the superintendent, who should be elected at least a month earlier. The

studies of each class for the coming year should be announced and the new books distributed. Most important of all, the promotions for the year, with announcement of every pupil's standing, should be impressively attended to. It is the great day of the Sunday-school year.

How the superintendent is chosen will depend on whether the Sunday school is or is not independent of local church relationship. In a church school the superintendent ought always to be chosen by the church; for in no other way can the church's responsibility for its school be enforced and discharged. The choice, however, should be in consultation with the Sunday-school workers and subject to their ratification or rejection; in which latter case it would be the duty of the church to propose another name. The superintendent thus chosen can begin his year's work with his force around him and his church behind him; and he ought to look forward with joy to the good report he is to make of his stewardship at the year's end. The union school will of course elect its superintendent at its own business meeting, two months before the beginning of his official term.

The secretary, the librarian, the associate superintendent, the chorister or accompanist, and any other officers needed for the superintendent's staff of official helpers, should be nominated by him at the workers' conference next after his election and approved by that body. It is a serious mistake to choose these officers by nomination in meeting, without consulting the executive head of the school as to the helpers he wants. Let him pick them himself; then let the teachers pass on their acceptability.

Two Plans of Class Formation.—In reorganizing the classes, the little Sunday school may make its choice of two plans. It may make every class a fixed class, annually promoting every pupil whose age and attainment fit him for the work of the class ahead. This is the method which has been assumed and recommended throughout this book. In the beginners' and primary classes and the adult class it is the only way. But for the junior, intermediate and senior classes another method is possible and for some reasons desirable. We may call it the movable class plan.

By this method the superintendent, once in three years, will organize a new junior class out of the primary class and send it forth on its upward journey. Its members will range in age from eight to ten, perhaps eleven years. If the school is larger, such a class may be formed oftener than once in three years. From time to time, also, the senior class will finish its work and go bodily into the adult class or the ranks of the teachers and officers. On the Promotion Day when a junior class reaches the average age of twelve, it will be designated an intermediate class; when fifteen, a senior class; when eighteen, a graduating class, ready to join the adults or go to work. Teachers should properly change classes at these times, shifting to the class below and so continuing their junior, intermediate or senior work with a new class of pupils. There are no individual promotions. Each class pursues steadily the closely graded lessons, taking every year's course in its proper order.

Each of these plans has its advantages and disadvantages. The school should weigh both with care,

decide which of the two it will follow, and pursue consistently the plan adopted. A few years hence it will be possible, as it is not now, to say positively which of the two plans will bring on the whole the best results. We may expect to find enthusiastic advocates on either side. It would be well to have in every county one or more little schools with fixed classes and others with movable classes, each following a graded course of study. Their delegates could then discuss the matter at the county convention and compare results.

The Course of Study.—In Chapter II we considered the general question of lessons for the little Sunday school, and what lessons the superintendent should endeavor to introduce as the lesson system of his school. In Chapter V we also considered how each term's work on these lessons might be stimulated and appraised. Presuming that the matter is settled that the school is to use graded lessons in every class as soon as that is practicable, the question now confronts us, What lessons shall our five classes teach next year?

If the graded lessons were correctly introduced, the answer to this will not be hard to find. Let each class proceed to the next year of the course. The primary class began with the first primary year; it will now proceed to the second primary year; and so with the junior class, and with the intermediate also, if they too adopted the new course. If a beginners' class has been organized, it will go on to the second year, or will begin with the first year if it is starting now. When any class finishes the last year of its department course, the teacher will begin again with

the first year, all those who began with him before having now passed on to the next higher class. If he has kept his note-books and his teachers' manuals, he will be able now to give the lessons in better form and at less expense to the school.

The method thus outlined is called the departmental plan of handling the graded lessons. It goes with the fixed class plan of graded organization. It can be followed with two or more junior classes as easily as with one, if the school prefers, all following the same lessons together. It was to make this use of the graded system easier in small schools that some of the denominational publishers issued their departmental lesson periodicals already referred to.[1] But the closely graded lessons can also be used departmentally, and are so used in many little schools. In such schools, when a second junior class is organized, it can be given its own grade of lessons, as shown in the table on page 53.

The unfortunate feature of this departmental lesson method is that different sets of promoted pupils get their graded lessons in a different order. Those entering the junior class from the primary class last year got the first year junior lessons; those promoted this year will get the second year junior lessons, and will not get those of the first year till they are twelve years old. The departmental lesson issues aim to meet this, first by making the junior cycle only three years long, nine to eleven, and then by so planning the lesson work that each year's course will be equally adapted to all the junior years. A teacher using the closely graded junior text-books, with a little help

[1] Chapter II, page 39.

from a lesson magazine, could do much of this adapting himself.

What this method particularly needs is an introductory primer or supplemental lesson-help for those entering the junior class and not receiving the work of the first junior year. A month of special attention to such pupils, especially as to their use of the Bible, would enable them to go on with profit in the second and third junior year, possibly even in the fourth also. A month or two of similar special drill prior to promotion should be given the intending graduates, to fit them for taking up the advanced work of the intermediate biographical course.

The movable class plan provides for going through the whole graded course without disarrangement of order. Each class takes every year the next course and finishes it. No introductory or finishing courses are necessary. The difficulty here is that only one-third or one-fourth of the class is correctly graded. The junior class starts off with ages ranging from eight to ten or eleven, and it studies the first year course, intended for pupils nine years old. Year after year this arrangement continues. The pupils who were younger than the lessons at eight are in the same position when they are fifteen : they have for all these years been studying lessons a little too old for them. This difficulty, however, will tend to disappear ; as the intermediate courses, it is found, can be followed with profit by any age from thirteen to sixteen or even older. A more serious objection to the movable class plan is likely to be found in the difficulty of transferring teachers after three or four years' service with an unbroken class.

Observing Promotion Day.—Whether by the fixed class plan or with movable classes, Promotion Sunday must be observed with such dignity as befits a great event in the younger pupils' lives. Let the preparations be made well in advance. On the superintendent's roll let each pupil have his correct graded rating, with some mark against the names of such as have done work worthy of honor. In the exercises of the day, the reading of these names, with the higher ratings for the new year, will be the climax of interest. Begin at the bottom, with the names of the cradle roll members promoted to the beginners or primary class. These earliest promotions may take place semi-annually or oftener, but they should all be announced here. The children, sitting with their parents, should be escorted by a committee of beginners to their new place, and a welcome song sung in their honor. From beginners to primary the change can be made in the same way. In the promotions from the primary to the junior class each pupil may be presented by the school with a Bible, of the kind regularly used in the class. The ceremony of transfer should vary with each class, to correspond with the feelings of the different ages. To treat an intermediate as he has just seen the primary children treated would be an offense indeed. Promotion certificates may be awarded if the school desires: they are not essential.

The practical value of this ceremony is considerable. It sets forth to all the reality of the Sunday school as a school and the dignity of its lesson tasks. The memory of it spurs the careless to complete their Bible memorizing and their note-book work, lest

they lose honor and mention on the great day when the work is judged. Under the spell of the swiftly moving program the attention of pupils and class is taken away from the sadness of bidding farewell to the beloved former teacher and focused on the new work in the new class, or under the new teacher, with whom they are now to be. Changes that would be quite impossible if proposed in cold blood in the middle of the year can be carried through without a ripple on Promotion Sunday.

Present and Future Teachers.—When the superintendent, by diligent interviewing and patient persuading, has secured the last teacher needed on his team for the coming year's work, and has provided each with the text-books and teacher's manuals of his yearly course, his work as captain and manager is about one-quarter done. Another fourth of the task will be to lead and test the teaching work. No teachers in any kind of school can run long without supervising and coöperation. A plan for measuring and appraising the teaching work was given in Chapter V. In most classes, however, other help will be needed if the year's work in every class is to be well done. Here again may be emphasized the great value to the superintendent of a competent director of instruction, one who has learned how to teach and can help each teacher to find and follow the right method for his particular class and his lesson course. If such a helper is to be had, let him be formally elected and his duties and responsibilities defined, that none may despise his educational authority within his official sphere.

Duties of the director of instruction will include

the keeping of the graded roll, the grading and assignment of each new pupil in consultation with the superintendent, the study of each lesson course and discussion of the same with the teacher in charge, the noting of all important memory assignments and the hearing of these recited from time to time. Whatever the director can do to lead to better teaching will be part of his task. The rather complicated order sheet for graded lesson supplies should be filled out by him alone, and he should also check and approve the goods on receipt and mark for distribution; unless the secretary can be fully trusted to attend to these matters. If such a worker can be retained as general helper, free of steady class teaching, the substitute problem will be fairly well solved. This, however, will not often happen in the little Sunday school.

So far, so good, as to half the superintendent's teacher-problem. The classes are now, let us hope, in good hands. How long will they stay so? In a fairly settled and quiet neighborhood about one teacher in every four or five drops out in the course of a year, for legitimate causes. In some fields half the force needs renewing before the year is out. Next year's line-up will surely need "new blood" somewhere; and if our team of five years hence is to play a better game than that of the present season, it is none too soon to begin now the work of coaching recruits in general hitting and base-running and also for their special places. In other words, we need a teacher-training class.

So much has been issued on teacher-training that it might perhaps be enough to refer the superintend-

ent to the leaflets of his own denomination and of his state or provincial Sunday-school association, with further reference to the books on the subject. The matter is not specifically one relating to the little school; for every Sunday school must provide for the improvement and the renewal of its teaching force or drop out of the race. A small class, meeting at another hour than that of the school session, with the active teachers and some of the young folks joining in common study, is a good plan for many little schools; because such a class can be taught by the director of instruction, the superintendent or the pastor without interference with Sunday duties, and behind it can be thrown the full force of the school's enthusiasm. But a session class of young persons not teachers, taught as a branch of the young people's or senior class, is equally desirable and in some cases easier to carry. Suitable courses and text-books are listed in the leaflets referred to. Keep the eye of the class on its coming fitness for teaching service, rather than on the certificates and diplomas it is to win.

The Official Staff.—While the little Sunday school needs no such array of officers as must be found in a school of three or four hundred, it does need some; and the work of finding them and setting them at work for the new year is not easy. Besides the superintendent there must be a capable secretary; and unless the superintendent himself is a school man or otherwise trained for educational leadership, there must be a director of instruction. The duties of these officers have already been discussed.[1] A musical leader is also essential, who will be the or-

[1] Chapter V, pp. 86, 88–92; Chapter VI, p. 105 f.

ganist or pianist unless the school has a chorister ; in which case the accompanist will rank as the chorister's assistant. If the superintendent can lead the singing at all, he had better be his own chorister. The director of instruction, if not also a teacher, may act as associate superintendent ; otherwise some one, preferably a promising young man, should hold and fill that office. The secretary can generally look after the little school's library ; but if at all needed, let a librarian be appointed. The birthday secretary's work, described on page 91, may be an independent office or under the care of the secretary.

Each of these main officers of the superintendent's cabinet, with the assistants whom they in turn have named, and with the treasurer and recording secretary elected by the workers' conference, should be formally installed a Sunday or two after the opening of the year, or as part of the ceremonies of Promotion Sunday. Secure if possible the presence of the pastor or some other visiting dignitary. Arrange a simple service, including a few appropriate verses from the Bible, the reading of the names and offices by the superintendent, a few questions by the pastor as to each candidate's acceptance, his promises and his reliance on Divine help, a prayer of consecration and a hymn of work and service. The teachers may also be installed at the same time ; and the school should pledge its faithful coöperation with each officer and teacher in the year of work thus undertaken.

With his staff thus around him, the superintendent who would get hearty and faithful service from each officer and teacher must not fail to protect each worker in his own jurisdiction and to notice, com-

mend and support every bit of work that is well done. Keep the eyes of all on the great task to be accomplished, while encouraging each to feel that his particular bit is a little more important than all the rest. Give scope for originality, and let each good piece of work bring credit to the worker by name. Be firm in seeking the best results but teachable by others as to ways and means for attaining these results. People have different ways of doing things. Whenever jealousy or hard feeling breaks out, bring on some new benevolent enterprise in which all must join and work with a will to make it successful.

The School's Finances.—It is the superintendent's duty to see that the Sunday school's income fully covers its expenditures and that its bills are paid on time. To let periodical accounts hang on for a year or longer, and to order more than can be paid for within the time of a reasonable accommodation, is not good religion. In planning the year's work, the budget of expense should be figured out with care, not by guesswork but by ascertaining as closely as may be just what each projected activity and purchase will cost. A file of receipted bills showing former costs will help in this. The necessary outgo thus figured, and the items approved in workers' conference, equally definite plans for securing the money must next be determined upon.

It is a great mistake to measure the school's ability to advance financially by what it has succeeded in doing before. The expense of graded lesson textbooks as compared with quarterlies or lesson leaves has made many a superintendent in a little Sunday school turn down the plan without further considera-

tion. But where did last year's income come from? How much of each family's income was contributed to the Sunday school? During the same period, how much did these families spend on luxuries and indulgences? Convince the households concerned that the new lesson books are worth paying for, and money to pay for them will be forthcoming. But the superintendent, in ways already suggested, must do this convincing; and then he must coin the new interest into contributions that will meet the new expense.

The annual budget of the school, with any special payments under it which involve a change of items or an unusual expenditure of any sort, should be submitted to the workers' conference for discussion and decision. The workers should know what their work is costing and how the school's money is being spent. Otherwise they cannot take the interest they should in the school's financial problems.

Where the little Sunday school is part of a church, the same rule holds as in all church schools: the school should be supported by the church. This does not mean that the school shall lose its financial self-respect. Let it take pride, if it will, in putting into the church treasury more than it draws out. But let the children feel that their school is part of the church in which they are or are to be members, that the church is generously paying their expenses, and that they contribute regularly to its support. Let the church in turn feel its responsibility for the school. Once a year, at the annual church meeting, let it be settled what the school's budget is to be and how the money is to be paid; also on which Sundays the collection is to go for church support, and which are to be reserved

for benevolent offerings. By this sliding scale the balance can easily be struck, according to the needs of the church and the giving power of the Sunday school.

The Sunday-school treasurer should not be counted one of the superintendent's assistants, like the secretary or the librarian. He is rather an officer of the disbursing body, the workers' conference, and should be chosen by them from among their number. Whether he shall handle the money furnished by the church for school expenses or simply receive the school's offerings and pay them to the church treasurer or send them on to the proper benevolent treasury, is a matter to be settled locally. In an independent school, of course, this question will not arise. The superintendent must insist on the treasurer keeping an account so simple and clear that the report at each workers' conference will show exactly where the school stands, what bills if any it owes and what is its present duty or privilege as to new expenditure. Every benevolent offering, also, must be promptly represented by a receipt showing that the full amount has been remitted and acknowledged. It will be well to put the chairman of the missionary committee in charge of these benevolent receipts.

The giving of the school is no small part of its educational system. Every offering received should be the expression by the givers of some feeling and purpose, the outcome of a lesson which has impressed their minds and touched their hearts. In most cases the little school will ordinarily devote its collection to local maintenance, contributing to benevolent and missionary objects only on stated occasions. No self

respecting Sunday school, however poor, will give to missions and benevolence less often than once a quarter. Once a month, on the first or some other fixed Sunday, is much the better rule. A church school, as already stated, will so arrange that its ordinary offerings are for church support, thus appealing to the pupils' loyalty to their church and its work. In a union school, or wherever the offering is merely for school expenses, do not dwell on the idea that we are paying our share of the cost of what we are getting. Train the pupils rather to look on their gifts as offerings to help our school continue its good work. The officers and teachers give both money and work. The pupils in some cases give work ; but they and their parents can all give money, and God will bless it to great results, now and in days to come. Receive every offering with a word of prayer, and count it as part of the school's service of worship.

The Workers' Conference.—The plans for the year would be incomplete indeed without an appointment and program for the regular meetings of the workers' conference. By this new name is now designated what has been called the teachers' meeting, the teachers' business meeting, the Sunday-school association, the Sunday-school board, and perhaps other names. Its membership includes the officers, the teachers and the presidents of the senior and adult classes, with the pastor and perhaps other officers of the church. In order to tie up the young people's society, the missionary society, and other local church and religious organizations, the heads or appointed representatives of these should also be included in the workers' conference roll.

Regular monthly meetings of this body, on a stated evening or other time, should be provided for by resolution or by-law. The meetings may be held at some centrally located home. The program of the conference will include devotion, business and instruction, an earnest though brief period of prayer and Bible meditation, a brisk raising and settling of definite items in a docket of business, and a half-hour period of study and discussion on some text-book or some vital topic of Sunday-school life, such as :

The Teacher's Influence.
How to Arouse Interest in the Lesson.
The Needs of Our Community.
Why We Should Give to Foreign Missions.
What I Learned at the Convention.
If I Were Superintendent.

By assigning topics like these to the members, to be responded to with a ten-minute paper or address followed by twenty minutes of discussion, the thoughts of the whole force can be drawn together and focused on one Sunday-school problem after another ; and whether or not these problems are solved and improvements secured, the spirit of comradeship in service will surely be advanced.

VII

GETTING RESULTS

Reasonable Expectations.—Taking one year's record as the measuring unit of its life, work and opportunity, what, within that period, ought the little Sunday school to accomplish? We have been discussing so far the plant and the process. What of the product? The farmer expects to harvest a definite crop, the merchant to earn a definite profit, the manufacturer to finish a definite output, the stockholder to receive a definite dividend. What shall be the crop, the profit, the output, the dividend of this Sunday school for the year next ensuing?

It is true that much of what any Sunday school accomplishes is known only to God. It is also true that results of high value often come from features of the work on which we, the leaders, had previously set small store. God's power is greater than our plans; even as His infinite love for the souls He has entrusted to us is greater than our interest and affection for them, however sincere. But it is also true that God works through means, and that our capacity for analyzing, investigating, planning and executing is part of the means. Science is constantly turning its light on the dark corners of nature and showing the causes and laws that control results in fields hitherto deemed inscrutable. To make a close analysis of his own little Sunday school, with a view to determining what ought to be its standard product

when rightly run, is part of the superintendent's duty; and for him to balk at this on the ground that it is God's work and therefore above analyzing is just pious laziness, with a probable admixture of reluctance to have his work submitted to any efficiency test whatsoever.

Our basis of expectation must include the record of what we have succeeded in accomplishing in the past. But it must also take note of what we need to accomplish in order to discharge fully our trust. The little Sunday school is frequently the sole representative of organized religion in its community. It is therefore a station on the picket line of the Church of Christ, and as such has a work to do which must be done if the great cause is to be saved from disaster. To do as well as last year, or even to make a ten per cent. increase, is not enough. The real question is, What is it that we need to do, and how nearly perfect shall be our doing of it?

Five fields of effort stretch before the little Sunday school. First of all is the community in which it stands, with the wider field, reaching even to the end of the world, of which it is a part through gifts, study and prayer. By the law of Christ, it must lose its life in order to find it: it must live for others before it can begin to do its part for and with its own. Then comes the development of Christian character in its members; of which their conversion to Christ will ever be the central fact, though neither the beginning nor the end of the school's teaching effort. By the common consent of educators no less than the teachings of the church, the Bible, apart from its standing as God's inspired Word, is the basis and

source of our best lessons in character: hence Bible teaching will form the third line of effort for the school. This will be supplemented and illustrated by lessons from nature and from the lives and work of Christ's followers in later ages and in the modern field of missionary and social service; but it may all be called Bible teaching, since Bible principles and precedents will underlie every lesson. Training for service, an extension of the work for character, will be our fourth division. Finally, we must provide for self-perpetuation, through effort directed to the strengthening and continuation of the school and its work.

What, then, under these five heads, ought the reader's particular little Sunday school to accomplish in one year? That question no authority outside the field itself should presume to answer. Let the superintendent himself answer it, by checking, in the list which follows, every item that he feels might fairly be debited against his school; its size, equipment, force, condition of educational progress and quality of leadership being duly considered. Let him add, as well he may, other items not here enumerated. Let all the items, as checked and added, be noted in his pocket record, read and discussed at the workers' conference and made the background of his annual report. Let him lay them often at the footstool of the Master Superintendent in humble prayer.

A Table of Results.—Bearing in mind what has just been said, it seems reasonable to ask that a rural Sunday school of five classes and about fifty members, led by a consecrated, determined and capable leader, adequately supported, should in one year's time per-

form the following services for its members and the community, less such items as the superintendent shall feel to be an overcharge against his particular school:

(A) Community Uplift

The peace kept; no new personal or family quarrels.

Progress in coöperation; some family or individual reconciled and added or restored to the company of workers.

Previous community undertakings, if any, for local and outside service encouraged and kept up.

Some new or special enterprise undertaken by the community for its own and others' good: the Sunday school having had something to do with the movement.

Some particular hindrance to moral progress shown up, attacked and overcome.

Gifts made to at least four missionary or benevolent causes, for work in communities beyond local reach.

(B) Development of Christian Character

Freedom of the community reached from special cases of juvenile and adolescent delinquency.

Favorable reports received from parents and schoolteachers of the daily conduct of the children.

Regularity and increase in attendance of children at church.

Establishment in the older beginners (children of five) of right relations with God; as manifested, among other ways, in love for Jesus, appreciation of God's goodness in nature and release from childish fears. (This item to become an obligation after a beginners' class has been organized and supplied with the lessons of the beginners' course.)

Establishment in the older primary children (seven and eight) of habits of daily home prayer, the study of Bible texts and hymn verses, the creditable finish-

ing of hand-work, regularity of attendance, reverent conduct, the exercise of family graces, and progress in personal relations with God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

Establishment in the junior children of habits of daily Bible reading, church attendance and attention, regular giving and lesson study ; with a readiness to take steps indicative of the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Public confession of Christ as Saviour and evidence of Christian experience by intermediate and senior pupils, to a number averaging, from year to year, one-sixth of the total enrollment of such pupils.

Some adult conversions and renewals in grace.

Increase, especially among the teachers and other adults, in the spirit of willingness to learn.

Some new recruits for active service from among the seniors and adults.

Some increase in the social virtues, fellowship, sympathy, coöperation, loyalty and the like.

(C) Bible Teaching

In the school as a whole :

One year's training in worshipful approach to God, through the reverent use of well planned opening services, including Bible verses, song and prayer.

Lessons in fellowship, giving, temperance and other elements of character-training, with appropriate Bible readings, presented on at least twenty Sundays of the year.

At least ten lessons or talks on missions given from the platform ; with response to these and other missionary lessons in the form of offerings made and service rendered. (The lesson is not taught until it has been expressed by the pupil's own free act.)

Thirty Bible verses, preferably in the form of longer passages, and three standard hymns, memorized by the school and used in its worship.

Ten new and good hymn tunes learned.

Two educational festival programs prepared and given by the school to the community.

By the graded classes :

The standard graded lessons, including intermediate lessons, taught regularly in each class, with at least six months' work in each class completed. Some sort of response (attention, answers to simple questions, interest in the lesson, home work attempted, home work fully done) secured from every pupil whose faculties are normal.

From one-half the pupils in intermediate and lower grades, lesson hand-work secured of quality available for exhibition.

All pupils graduating from one class or department course to the next made ready for the work of the higher course.

By the senior and adult classes :

At least forty lessons well presented by regular teacher, with class discussion thereon.

Record of at least twenty practical topics that were discussed in class at some length, several taking part and views freely stated.

Each class self-managed throughout the year.

Average attendance equal to at least one-half the average enrollment.

These classes have each, through committees or otherwise, conducted one or more investigations and brought in reports as to local evils, local or general needs, or opportunities for service, with class discussions thereon and some work done in following up the matter. The township roads, the condition of the church burying ground, the church ventilation and how to improve it, a reported "speak-easy," where and how the boys spend their Sundays, what books our people are buying and reading, possibilities of the country church, missionary work in Moslem lands, the present condition of our county poorhouse —such are samples of the lines on which such investigations and reports might be made.

(D) Training For Service

Regular tasks for the Sunday school performed by the children under older leaders.

Newly promoted juniors familiarized with the use of the Bible as a book.

Definite and related Bible knowledge, familiarity with maps and other helps in Bible study, and interest in Bible narratives and events, imparted to the juniors: one-fourth of the whole regular course covered.

Ideals of service and heroism for Christ imparted to intermediates, as shown in essays and other responses.

Interest in selected missionary fields and workers imparted to the pupils generally, as shown in increased offerings to missionary causes.

Increase in the use of the library and demand for books helpful in character-growth and training for service.

Organization or maintenance of an active young people's society, with a year's definite service along usual Christian Endeavor or similar lines.

Completion of a year's standard teacher-training work by one or more senior or adult training-class students.

Resumption of Sunday-school membership and service by former members returned from college or other outside opportunities for growth, so far as permitted by conditions of the stay at home. (If this does not take place, the leader should inquire what is the matter with his school, that it should fail to appeal to these young people as a field for service.)

At least one decision during the year, by an undergraduate or graduate pupil, to dedicate the life to some form of Christian service.

(E) Self-Perpetuation

Annual meeting held; officers and teachers elected and appointed for the new year.

The school reorganized, with all pupils promoted one grade, except in the adult class and where demotion is necessary for the pupil's good.

All members enlisted in loyal fellowship and service for the support and improvement of the school.

Former members kept track of, and their loyalty preserved and expressed in an annual communication and contribution.

An average of one student per year of a standard teacher-training course graduated and enlisted in the teaching force as teacher, assistant or substitute.

An average of one pupil a year added to the force of official assistants.

Each teacher, or his successor, continued for the new year in the work of teaching pupils of the same range of ages as those constituting the class at the outset of the previous year. (Applies to schools following the fixed class plan.)

The school's relation maintained with its larger denominational and territorial fellowship, through the prompt and full rendering of its statistical reports and the payments of its due and equitable contributions to the denominational and the associated interdenominational Sunday-school work.

Ideas and stimulus for better work received from some institute or convention.

Overcoming Difficulties.—Over against this ideal (which, let it be repeated, the superintendent is to cut down until it fits his school and his ambition), let us place some of the more common difficulties reported from the little schools, and see what we are to do with them. Which of these, brother, applies to your field?

"There is such a low spiritual tone in our neighborhood."

"We have so few that are willing to help."

"We have to deal with a rough element that would not stand for such work as you describe."

"There is so much illiteracy in our community that we have to use teachers who can barely read

and write. What could they do with your graded lessons?"

"The people are very old-fashioned and set in their ways."

"We are so split up with quarrels and jealousy. If they would only pull together, we might have a good school."

"Our roads are very bad, especially in winter, and there is no place near the schoolhouse where horses can be sheltered from the weather."

"Our best families are moving away."

"Our young people leave us."

"This is a transitory population hereabouts: we have almost a new school every year."

"We have one or two faithful workers who refuse to adopt the new ways."

"The influence of the homes is against us."

"Our pastor gives us very little help."

"I have been superintendent here for twenty-three years, and I think I know how this school ought to be run."

Well, what shall we say to these difficulties? Not all of them, fortunately, are found on the same field. Some are merely the same old resistance that the apostolic message has always had to encounter. Paul in Corinth had to face most of them; and if he could have the help of the Spirit and of the comforting presence of Jesus with him as he struggled, so can we. Brethren, the vision of the little Sunday school set forth in this book is nothing but the Gospel of our blessed Lord put into adapted and effective educational form. Of course it will have to cut its way through difficulties. But back of it we may through faith and prayer put the mighty power of the kingdom of God. The difficulties are what we are here for. Let us go forward.

The remedy for low tone is high standard. Do not be afraid of things different from what the people expect in a Sunday school. Some workers and followers of kindred spirit you now have: draw these together in bonds of ever closer fellowship and enthusiasm. Have something that the world will want, keep it pure and sound, and let the world know of it through reasonable publicity and community service. As for the rough element, they are easier to reach and lead than the rich and fashionable element, and will soon appreciate any genuinely loving effort that is made intelligible to them. The inertia of the "old-fashioned" folks is by no means confined to the rural districts; on the contrary, it is to the communities where little schools are the rule that we look for the great progressive movements that are steadily advancing the cause of democracy and social justice in our land.

In those special fields where illiteracy to a greater or less extent prevails, it is true that some of the graded lesson machinery cannot be used as planned. But illiteracy and stupidity are two very different things. The chance of finding a bright, motherly, sensible primary teacher in such a neighborhood is quite as good as in the city field; and the love of Jesus and of little children needs no alphabet to spell its lore. Story-telling is one of the primitive arts, and most of our graded beginners and primary work now consists of stories. Let this teacher be given a young assistant who can meet her in the home during the week, to read over the lesson story and the Bible references, and to learn with her the memory text and song verse. Add to this the pic-

tures furnished for class display, illustrating the story, and one or two simple lessons in method, based on the general explanations in the teacher's manual, and the illiterate primary teacher may prove an educational jewel. By a like process the junior and intermediate teachers can be brought along. Let the class meet at the teacher's home to talk over the lessons to come. They go to school, and can read if the teacher cannot. In the young people's class let social life and class organization be the leading features, with lessons in practical Christian service. As for the adult class, let them once in a while visit the primary class and hear again the gospel stories and Old Testament narratives of the graded course. In many sections, as experience shows, they thus hear some of the most familiar Bible stories for the first time.

Quarrels and jealousy are symptoms of a selfish community. The people have too narrow a world to think about and be interested in. Such traits are the grown-up equivalent of disorder and scuffles among the smaller fry, and are to be met in the same way—by giving the whole company something new and interesting to do. What will interest them is a matter to be carefully studied. Consider the things in which these people are rich; then find and present to them, in the most concrete and appealing form, some class who in those same things are poor. Have they fresh air and sunshine, woods and streams, freedom and manly independence? Tell them of the cooped and enslaved toilers in the slums, the child-widows and caste-bound millions of India, the lepers, the sufferers from the awful ravages of war. Organ-

ize first for service on behalf of some of these, then for further study and prayer in order to know more of the conditions and the gospel work now being done. How can jealousy and strife survive, when we are working together with our Lord?

About the road question and the need of horse-sheds or windbreaks to encourage regularity in all weathers, little need here be said. To face and meet such a community need is exactly the lesson to be set in the forefront of the school's educational and Christian program. Whatever will serve and bless the community in its daily life, make living easier and life more worth while, is an appropriate activity for the church of Jesus Christ and a worthy accompaniment of the proclamation of the Gospel.

By just such services, together with a practical interest in the quality of public school education and in the social and cultural life of the community, can an active Sunday-school band of workers fight the difficulty of a vanishing population. These prosperous families and ambitious young people leave for reasons. Give them better reasons for staying, and they will not go. The little Sunday school, if only as a matter of self-interest, should study well the modern literature of country life, and should line up with the rural life movement. Invite the agricultural college or other rural life workers to hold an institute with you, and then work their plans.

In the great lumber regions of our country and in mining and dry-farming areas, the tendency of people to camp and move on seems irresistible. If the little Sunday school finds itself in such case, let it try to arrange its studies in compact three-months units,

teaching what it can in that time and reorganizing its force anew for each term. The superintendent will have to do much coaching of new teachers; but how widely the seeds of his work will be spread!

The old teacher who declines to take up with the new ways is no merely rural problem. We find him (and her) everywhere. Patience and love, combined with a steady call for results, will win. All judgments as to teachers and officers should be objective, based on a record and a standard which has or has not been attained; never subjective, based on what the leader thinks or feels. If the superintendent can say no more than that he does not like So-and-so as a teacher, he should keep still until he can state his reasons in objective form.

The Securing of Life-Decisions.—The educational process naturally leads the pupil up to thresholds on which he must decide some momentous issue. The teaching on temperance, for instance, leads to the settlement of the pupil's attitude for life as to the use of intoxicants and other indulgences. When this leading is wisely planned and carried out, results in character-formation are possible that otherwise it would be vain to look for.

The principle governing the use of Promotion Day as a time for securing necessary separations of pupils and teachers will apply here. By appointing a day for the consideration of our subject and heightening the feelings appropriate to the day, we open the way to the doing on that day of unusual deeds. Temperance Day, therefore, should not come too often to lose its force as an occasion. It should be preceded by one or two Sundays of desk instruction on the evils of

intemperance, personal and national. Good pledge-cards should be ready and in the teachers' hands. After a short but earnest program of appropriate recitations, Bible reading and prayer, let the temperance decisions be called for, to be expressed by taking the card and either signing it or carrying it home for signature with the parents' approval. Decisions quietly reached at home and then bravely announced in Sunday school are worth far more than those secured under the spur of an insistent appeal.

Once made, the decision should be followed up. A temperance wall roll should be made or purchased and the name of each signer legibly written thereon. This should be hung where all can see and read the names. On the next temperance occasion there should be new names to add. The signers should be brought together once or oftener, and given a talk, with discussion, on how to keep the pledge, at home, in company, on visits and at college or school. A Band of Hope, even if run only for a year or two, will serve to clinch into lifelong conviction sentiments that otherwise might yield to the stress of temptation.

On precisely this plan the quest for decisions may be made on the fundamental issue of the pupil's personal relation to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. In this case all the graded teaching will lead up to and pave the way for the general appeal. Even so, however, there should be desk preparation for several Sundays, with one or more gatherings of the teachers and older pupils for prayer. Every decision for Christ that can be gained during these preliminary days should be welcomed, never held off. On the

day appointed have little talking and exhortation: make it rather a businesslike time for settling the matter of our relation to God and to Jesus Christ His Son. The decisions can be announced in any way that the religious customs of the church or the community call for; but they should be recorded with care. Every one thus confessing Christ will of course be welcomed into the kingdom and helped to walk in the Christian life and unite himself with others in practical Christian fellowship, utterance and work.

Less visible, and less often thought of, but equally important in the progress of Christ's kingdom, are the decisions for life-service made by the young men and women of eighteen to twenty-four. If not already professing Christians, these decisions may coincide with conversion; but many who found Christ in childhood or early youth have a new and deeper experience later; and for this the thoughtful senior teacher will earnestly work and pray. All the hero-teaching and the biographical, historical and social studies of the graded course point in the direction of lives dedicated wholly to God and devoted to the work of the kingdom, whether in ordinary vocations or in the ministry and other special Christian callings. The world has been taught by experience to look to the little Sunday schools in the rural fields for some of its ablest and most deeply consecrated leaders. In raising up and fitting for service such leaders, the Sunday school described in these pages may hope, under God, to make itself a potent factor in the progress of the kingdom.

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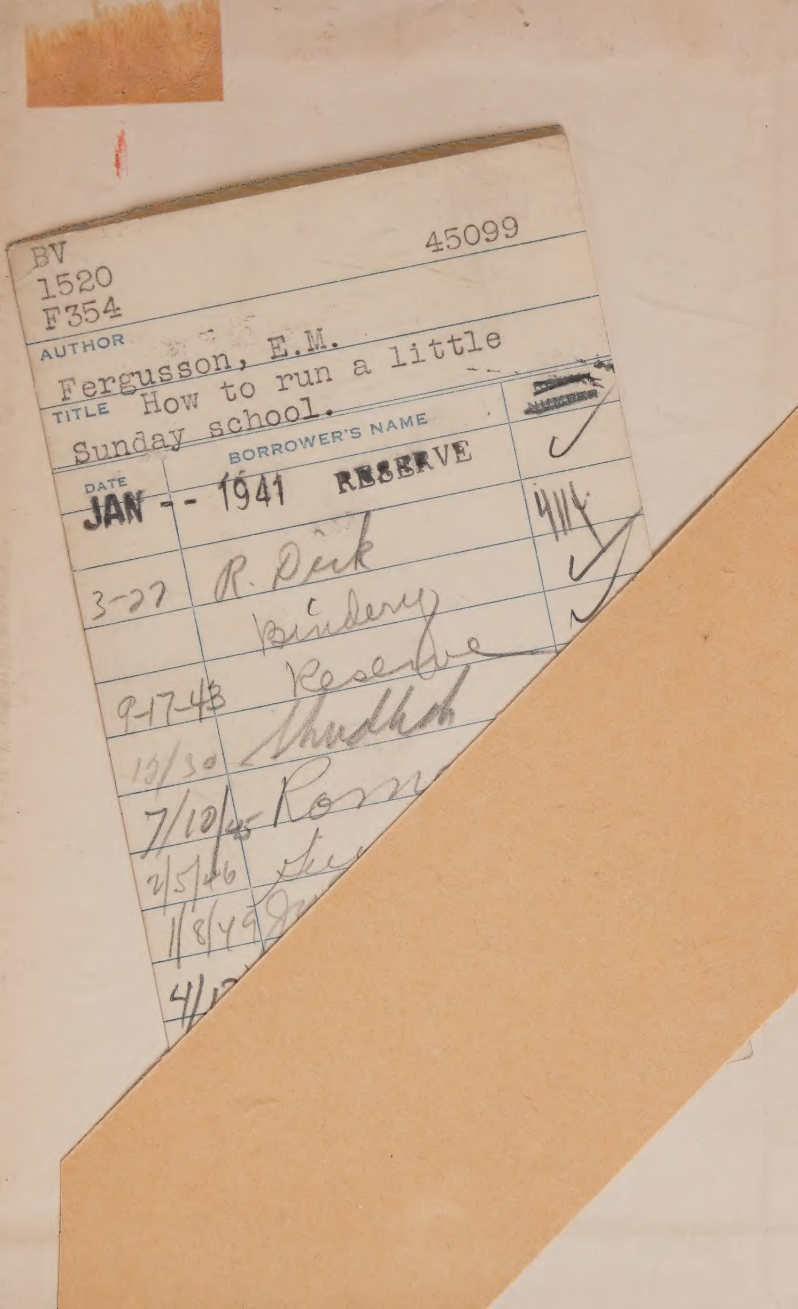

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